

A
TREATISE
OF THE
Souls Union
WITH
CHRIST.

6

Wherein is Declared,

What this *Union* with Jesus Christ is.
And many False Grounds of *Union* Discovered.

In which these Two weighty Quest. are largely handled, viz.

- I. How Souls do attain the first, certain, infallible Evidence of their *Union* with Christ.
- II. How Souls that conceive themselves to have received certain and satisfying Evidence of their *Union* with the Lord Jesus, may know certainly and infallibly that their Evidence of *Union* with Christ received, is really from God, and not a Diabolical Enthusiasm or Inspiration, or a Delusion from the Devils Translation of himself into Angelical Glory.

By J. L.

Examine your selves whether ye be in the Faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be Reprobates? 2 Cor. 13. 5.

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Five acts in Believing Souls whereby they exalt the name of God. Souls Confident they shall be everlastingly saved by Christ, put upon it to search into their Hearts, and seriously lay six things before them to consider of.

William Newson owns this book

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Ephes. i. 10. That in the Dispensation of the fulness of Times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are in Earth, even in him.

THE Apostle taking care of the Church of *Ephesus* after his departure from it; writes this Epistle for the Establishing their Hearts in the Riches of the Lords Free Grace in Christ, that the Lord had made their

B

Souls

And all our sinners
Souls Partakers of, that thereby he might excite and quicken them to all futable walking to such Priviledges.

This being his Scope, in this first Chapter, the Apostle begins to reckon up all those Glorious Priviledges by their several names, in their several Causes and orders; and therefore you shall see in *ver. 3.* He breaks out in the very beginning into a Holy Rapture of Praise and Admiration of God, to Bless his name for those high Priviledges, as Election, Justification, Vocation, and Glorification. Now in *ver. 8.* is comprehended the great Priviledge of their Vocation, in those words *wherein he hath abounded towards us in all Wisdom and Prudence, or Understanding; That is, in which Grace and Love before named, the Lord hath abounded towards us, through the Communicating that Grace of Wisdom and Understanding to us; That is, that Grace that made us receive and rest upon the Doctrine of the Wisdom of God to Salvation. And having thus named the Priviledge it self, ver. 9. He opens the manner of the Lords thus effecting this grace upon their Souls, in these words, having made known unto us the Myſtery of his Will, according to his good pleasure which he had purposed in himself. The manner of the effecting of it is by the Lords manifesting the Myſteries of his will to their Souls: And what he means by the Myſtery of his will he tells us ver. 13, it is the Word of Truth, the Gospel of Salvation; He means indeed the Salvation Preached in and through the Lord Chriſt alone, which was the great Myſtery that the Angels deſired to pry into. Now by the Revelation of this Myſtery the Lord did Communicate that Grace and Understanding to them.*

them, whereby they did embrace that pretious doctrine that made them wise to salvation. Now in opening of it, he amplifies it first, by the original cause in the latter end of verse 9. which is the Lords good pleasure purely in himself: Then he opens the ends of the Lords effecting this in this manner; that is, of the Lords revealing the mystery of his will to their souls, in these words, *That in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him*: Thus you see the occasion of the words: They contain the intended effect, or end the Lord aimed at, in the revelation of the Gospel of Christ to their souls. In this intended effect, there are several things observable.

1. The act it self in the producing the effect, that is union of Souls with Christ, [*That he might gather together in one*:] Indeed the union is twofold: First of all with Christ. Secondly, one with another; they are made both one with Christ, and one body within themselves.

2. Observe here the object upon which this effect is to be wrought, in these words [*All things*:] The object is laid down in general.

All things, that is, all persons predestinated according to the counsel of the Lords own will, to be his own in Jesus Christ, *that he might gather them together in one*. Secondly it is laid down more particularly, and that by a double distribution of the persons into the several places where they remain, in those words, [*both which are in heaven, and which are on earth*;] that is to say, that the Lord might unite to Jesus Christ, all those that are already ful-

ly joyned and compleatly united to him in heavenly glory, and all those that are upon the earth, whom the Lord doth intend to bring into that glorious union.

3. Observe here the subject with whom this union is to be perfected, and that is Christ himself. He is the very *punctum* as it were, he is that one point in which all these are to be gathered together in one.

4. Here is the time of the accomplishment of this effect. And that is in the first words [*In the dispensation of the fulness of times.*] Those words, *In the dispensation of the fulness of times*, seem to have some difficulty in them. They are a Metonymy of the Adjunct as we use to speak, where the dispensation of the fulness of times is put for the various successive times, in their own orders variously dispensed by the wisdom of God. The meaning is this, In the various seasons purposed by God himself successively, according to the Lords wise dispensation of those times in their orders, the Lord might thus gather together all to be one in Christ. Thus you see the words a little opened, and the meaning of them to be briefly this, That the Lord did reveal the mystery of his own will, that is, the Gospel of Jesus Christ to their souls for this end; that in the successive times that he hath purposed according to the counsel of his own will, as he is dispensing them in his own wisdom, he might gather together all the souls of his own to be one in Jesus Christ. There are divers things worthy our observation out of these words. First, we may consider them as they have dependance upon the former Verse, and therein we must consider the act it self named

named in the effect, and consider it as the end of the Lords revealing the mysteries of his will; it is to gather our souls to be one in Christ. From thence take notice of this conclusion.

Doct. That the purpose and intent of God, in discovering the truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ unto the Souls of men, is, that he might gather together their Souls into union with Jesus Christ, that by virtue of that union they might be one with the Father, and Christ are one.

By transgression in the loyns of Adam, we are all estranged from God, and there was an high wall of separation built up between him and our souls; Hence in Col. 1. 21. We are said to be alienated from God, and from the life of God, Eph. 4. 18. But though we have dealt thus unworthily with God, in our breach of union, and despising communion, the Lords love doth condescend so low, and the bowels of his compassion have been so unconceivably tender, towards poor worthless sinners, that he hath again provided a new and living way, for such souls as are so departed from him, to have access to himself; He hath provided his Son, a Mediator between himself and such wretched souls, and in and through that one Mediator, through that one *Days-man*, he offers to make himself one again with the soul. And lest Souls should be ignorant of this incomprehensible kindness of his, he hath written a glorious Gospel by the great Secretary of heaven, discovering the pretious workings of his own love, and sends messengers on purpose, to proclaim it to every soul: And the intent of God in all, is only

this, that he might gather souls into union with the Lord Christ, that so by that union, himself and those souls may again be one.

For the opening of this proposition, there are divers questions that souls would willingly have answered.

Quest. 1. What is this union with Jesus Christ? What is it to be one with Jesus Christ?

First, I must answer you negatively, what it is not. Secondly, affirmatively shew you what the union is.

Ans. First negatively, what it is not.

1. It is not a personal union with Jesus Christ, that men are called to by the Gospel. That we call the hypostatic union, which is the union of the humane nature with the divine: Now it is the nature of man in general that Christ took upon him, and not the person of man, for then there should have been a fourth person taken into the Trinity.

2. It is not an union of dependance. The Lord being the primary being, the first being of beings in the world; every thing that hath a being proceeds from God the first being, and is preserved in that being by influences from God: Now should the union of dependance upon God be broken, then the creatures should be broken and fall into nothing: Now in that respect all the creatures may be said to have union with God: so the poorest herb and weed hath an union of dependance.

3. It is not the union of presence, that is, of the Essential presence of God. The Lord being an infinite being, fills heaven and earth, and is not circumscribed in both; that is, he is not contained in both, but is infinitely in heaven and earth; And the
Lord

Lord, according to his own being, is as present in Hell as in Heaven, in this place as in that place. Now the Lord is in the creatures, and so it is called an union of presence: Every creature sensible and unsensible hath such an union, there is the presence of God in them: God hath his way in the poorest wood that hath a being, and it is impossible this should be broken, unless the nature of God can be taken away, and the infinite nature of God become finite.

Ans. 2. I shall answer affirmatively: The union that the Lord intends by the revelation of the Gospel, to bring your souls to in Christ, is according as the scriptures name it, *five-fold*.

1. There is an union of agreement, or an union of peace made up between Christ and the Soul. This is called in Scripture the reconciliation of the soul unto God, and unto Jesus Christ. Then persons are said to be divided, when there are jars and quarrels taken up by one person against another: but the removing of these quarrels and controversies between those persons, is the making those persons one again. Now this is the case between God and the soul; there was such a blessed harmony and agreement between the Soul and God in *Adam*, as there was not the least jar imaginable in God's bosom against us, nor in our bosom against God; but through our cursed transgression in the loyns of *Adam*, we gave God such offence, as he hath a quarrel against all the Sons of *Adam*, and our hearts have a cursed quarrel against God; whence we are said to be enemies in our minds. Now the union God intends to bring the soul to in Christ, is an union of agreement, that is, the removing all those

bars and differences between God and the Soul.

2. There is an union of Marriage, or a Matrimonial union. The Lord hath such infinite bowels of mercy in his bosom toward souls, that when they had despised that blessed union with himself, that he had given them by creation, he will make them better again than they were first made, by another union: he brings them into a marriage union, to make the Soul a Spouse to Christ, and Christ an Husband to the Soul; and that advanceth them in some measure above the Angels: They are but ministring spirits to Christ, and to the Spouse of Christ: they never had such an honour as to be the Spouse of Christ. This union you find frequently in Scripture; In *Eph. 5.* speaking of marriage between man and wife, saith he, *I speak concerning Christ and the Church.* So *Rev. 19. 7.* and *Chap. 21. 9.*

3. There is an union of spirit. He will communicate of his own spirit to the soul, and make his wife partake of the same spirit with himself, that the Saints and he shall be one spirit, *1 Cor. 6. 17.*

4. There is the union of likeness or similitude, between Christ and the Soul. That is, the Lord by the communication of himself unto the Soul, makes it to be a lively pattern of himself. Thence it is that in *Rom. 8. 29.* he tells us, he had predestinated us to be conformable to the Image of his Son. Hence he saith, *2 Pet. 1. 3.* *We are partakers of the divine nature;* That is, of the same nature that Jesus Christ is partaker of, that there should be an union of nature between Christ and the Soul; that is, an union of holiness; That as he did partake of the humane

humane nature, he will make his Spouse partake of the divine nature. Nay we are said to partake of the life of God, *Eph. 4 18*, that is, to live the same life of God.

5. There is the union of headship. That is to say, to have Jesus Christ as his head, and to be of the same body with Jesus Christ: This is commonly called by men, the mystical union, because it is an hidden union, that Christ and the Soul should be but one Body. This union is thus, that the Soul should be of the number of those Elect, that the Lord according to the counsel of his will, chose to be vessels, to which he would communicate of himself to all eternity.

Quest. 2. How can the revelation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, bring the Soul thus into union with Jesus Christ? How can the manifestation of the mysteries of Gods will effect such a gracious work as this, to unite the Soul to Christ in all those ways?

Answer, First, negatively. Secondly, affirmatively.

Ans. 1. We must not conceive that the revelation of Gospel truths, are the original, principal, efficient cause, of this union of Souls with Christ, as though this union of Souls with Christ did depend onely upon the working of those truths of the Gospel of Christ revealed. It is the will of God that is the principal efficient cause of union; The Lord hath not left the state of souls to be determined by themselves, either by resisting or embracing the Gospel of Jesus Christ: and therefore you shall see in the Verse before the Text, that the revealing of those truths of the Gospel, are said to be according to the purpose of the Lords own will.

2. Neither must you conceive, that those discoveries

veries of the Gospel do by their own effectual vertue produce this union between the Soul and Christ. Faith it self, which is the uniting grace, by which the union is made up, does not produce this union by any vertue, or efficacy, and proper quality in it self, but as God hath determined the revelation of the Gospel, and faith wrought by those revelations, to bring the soul into union.

3. Neither do those revelations of the Gospel to the outward ear work this effect of the Souls union with Christ. Thence it is said, *John 6. 45. Every one that hath learned of the Father cometh unto me:* It is not hearing and learning those truths from the mouth of man, that immediately produce those effects, but hearing from the Father, that is, by Gods giving inward beams of light to the understanding, whereby he doth discover the mysteries of his will to the soul.

Ans. 2. I answer affirmatively, The revelation of the truth of the Gospel doth produce this union three ways.

1. By discovering the union with Christ to be attained in the Soul-alluring properties of it. It is instrumentally that the Lord useth the revelation of the truths of the Gospel to manifest to the soul that an union is to be obtained, and to manifest the excellency, beauty, necessity, and satableness of that union to the souls present condition, whereby the soul is drawn to accept of that union. Now in regard union cannot be effected between Christ and the Soul, without a discovery that there is such an union to be obtained, therefore it is said, the Lord by revealing the truths of the Gospel to the Soul, does gather the soul into union, because this is the only

opely glass as it were, whereby the soul may discover the way of attaining an union between Christ and the Soul.

2. By conveying sight to the blinded soul, to apprehend that union. Though the most Orient bright glistering colours, be presented to the eyes of a man covered with darkness, they could not take up a mans meditations about them, neither could he be affected with them. Now the eyes of all men naturally are covered with darkness, that though the Gospel hold forth the union, yet we cannot be taken up with it, nor pass judgment upon it till the eye be opened; Therefore the Gospel presents an union to be obtained, and gives eyes to see that union. Hence it is said to be part of Christs office, *Isa.* 42. 6, 7. to open the eyes of the blind. And thence we are said in *1 John* 5. 2. to receive an understanding to know the Lord, and this is done by the revelation of the truths of the Gospel.

3. By insuling a disposition into the will to embrace that union propounded unto the soul in Christ. The Lord by these inward revelations doth convey an holy inclination into the perverse obstinate will, whereby the will is drawn to consent to the union propounded to the eye of the understanding. When once the soul hath received a spiritual eye, by those revelations of Gospel truths, to apprehend an union tendered to the soul in Christ, in the beauty, excellency, necessity, and futableness of it; that very vision of that union with the properties of it, doth change the disposition of the soul that wrought in opposition against God formerly, and causeth the will to desire that union propounded in Christ: The reason is, because then by the light communicated
to

to the soul, by these truths revealed, the soul apprehends that union as the onely chief good, and then the will cannot but close with it and embrace it: Then by the consent of the will to embrace that union, the union is made up between Christ and the soul, in the four respects mentioned, from whence do necessarily follow the union of likeness and similitude: And that is made up from those former unions two ways.

1. In regard of the necessary communion that is between Christ and the soul upon those first unions made up. No sooner does Christ become a head to the soul, and the soul a member of Christ by consent of will, but some influences flow from the head to the members; now those influences are part of his divine nature, part of his holiness.

2. The union of likeness follows, by the constraining arguments of the understanding unto the souls likeness unto Christ. When once the will, through the disposition infused into it, by beholding the truths of the Gospel of Christ, consents; the understanding presently draws such arguments from various particulars, or adjuncts, that always attend the union of the Soul with Christ, that thence the Soul is constrained to a likeness to Christ. (1.) Then the understanding begins to constrain the soul to a remembrance of the intent of Jesus Christ in uniting the soul unto himself. Thence the understanding compels the soul to a full conformity to Christ, as you may see *Rom. 6. 5, 6.* *If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, [that is, if we have partaken of the virtue of the death of Christ] we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: If we be like Christ in his death, we shall be like him in*
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Quest. 3. Why does the Lord intend by the revelation of the Gospel to bring souls into union with Christ?

For the answering this question, two things must first be premised in general.

1. That there is no one act of the Lords will that is the proper efficient cause of another act of his will. It is not because Gods will hath determined to bring to pass one thing, that therefore the Lord doth also determine to bring to pass another thing, as though the first act were the cause of the second act of Gods will; for Gods will is God himself, and so according to the simple act of Gods will, he wills all things together and at once.

2. That there is nothing that the Lord determines, that moves inwardly the will of God to determine another thing as the consequent of that. It is one of the absolute perfections of the divine Essence, that all his operations are dependent in himself: yet as some things in the order of the creation are effected by others, so properly it may be said, the Lord wills one thing for another, that is, the Lord wills one thing to produce such an end: As the Lord wills the Sun, Moon, and Stars, to have an influence into all things below, to preserve them in their being, and keep the natural vertues communicated to them: Though the influences of the Sun, Moon, and Stars be not the cause of Gods will, yet they are willed to that end. These things being premised, there are divers ends, which may improperly be called causes, of the Lords intent, by the revelation of precious Gospel truths, to bring Souls into union with Christ.

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Reas. 2. The Lord doth it, That he might communicate of his own glorious excellencies into souls. Now without this union with the Lord Christ, there can be no communications of those excellencies into souls; though there may be some influences into souls without this, yet not in that glorious way of communicating himself, whereby the Lord intends to make himself admired.

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4. Without this union, there could be no full communication of the Lord unto Souls. Though indeed the Lord might glorify himself, in communicating some degrees of his excellency in some way, as making himself glorious in Justice, and though outward mercies be communicated by the influences of his power in protection, and of his wisdom and providence in ordering things.

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to the soul, by these truths revealed, the soul apprehends that union as the onely chief good, and then the will cannot but close with it and embrace it: Then by the consent of the will to embrace that union, the union is made up between Christ and the soul, in the four respects mentioned, from whence do necessarily follow the union of likeness and similitude, And that is made up from those former unions two ways.

1. In regard of the necessary communion that is between Christ and the soul upon these first unions made up. No sooner does Christ become a head to the soul, and the soul a member of Christ by consent of will, but some influences flow from the head to the members; now those influences are part of his divine nature, part of his holiness.

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municating himself to the souls of his Saints, in regard those are chosen to that end. Now where there is an object beloved, there is always delight in doing good to such an object: Therefore the Lord draws souls into union with Jesus Christ, that they may be suitable subjects to communicate himself to.

Reas. 3. The Lord intends to draw souls into union with the Lord Christ, by revealing the truths of the Gospel, because he hath purposed and determined, to make the mystical body of Christ, the object of his own delight and contentment to all eternity. (1.) The Lord takes pleasure in dwelling among them, and manifesting himself to them. 2 Cor. 6. 16. It is the privilege of the Saints to have God dwell among them here, much more does the Lord intend to dwell among them to eternity. (2.) The Lord intends they should be his delight, in having sweet familiarity and precious converse with them. That converse properly consists in two things. First, in the Lords opening and revealing to their souls, all the secrets of his ways and works, that ever were manifested in the world, and that in their intended issue and effects. That manifestation of the beams of his own glory, that shined in all his ways, is a kind of familiar talk with the souls of his Saints. Secondly, it consists in the Lords being among them familiarly, without terrifying or affrighting them. Then Job shall have his desire, Chap. 9. 34. *Let not his face terrifie me, &c.* (3.) That their souls might have perfect communion with him, constant communion, without interruption and intermission. Now when there is a suitableness of the object for the perfection of love, then there is

a suitability for the perfection of delight, it being nothing but love in rest, or love enjoying the beloved object.

Reas. 4. The Lord intends this by the Gospel, to bring souls into union, in regard he intends to manifest the glory of the incomprehensible riches of his own love, in and through their souls. *Isa.* 43. 7. *Bring forth my Sons and Daughters, that I have created for my glory.* Now the Lord accounts the manifestation of the riches of his love and compassion to poor worthless man, to be one of the most precious, bright shining beams of his own glory: Therefore when *Moses* desired his glory to pass before him, he proclaimed his name *the Lord gracious, &c.*

Use 1. By way of information, Is it thus, that the Lords intent and purpose in revealing the precious truths of the Gospel, is to draw souls into union with Christ?

1. Then hence we may see a discovery of the dolefull, dreadfull, and too too common abuse of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: how is the Gospel troden under foot by a multitude of souls? How far do they come short when they come to attend upon Gospel Ordinances? How few consider that Christ hath appointed his Ordinances to draw their wretched, corrupt, obstinate hearts into union with Christ.

1. Consider, The neglect of desiring a conformity to this intent of God in the Gospel is a profanation of the precious Ordinance of God, it is a pollution of the great name of God in his Ordinances.

2. Consider what a mockery and dissimulation thy attendance upon the Gospel hath been unto God. Every Ordinance of God is appointed for God to be worshipped in, and thou by thy attending upon an

Ordinance, professeth thou dost worship God ; Now it is impossible for a soul to worship God , whilst he is ignorant, or regardless of the intent of God in an Ordinance.

3. Thy neglect of this great intent of God in his Ordinance, is a direct contrary walking unto God. In coming to an Ordinance, thou dost come with some intent or other ; It is inseperable from a rational creature upon a deliberate act, to work for some end. Now if thou dost always come with an intent, and hast neglected the intent of God ; it follows directly, it is a contrary walking to God.

II. Hence we may learn what a small number of hearts have had the right effect of the Gospel of Jesus Christ upon them. How few hearts can be found who are drawn into union with the Lord Christ by the power of the Gospel this day ? How many are careless and regardless, whether they be one with Christ or no ?

III. We may learn hence to behold the working of the heart of God towards us, in propounding of Gospel truths ; it is to bring your souls to be one with Christ.

IV. Hence learn, that every soul that refuseth the Lord Christ tendered, upon what ground soever can be imagined, is a rejecter of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many poor souls, through the cursed delusion of the old Serpent the Devil, conceive they do well to stand off from receiving the Lord Christ tendered in the Gospel : Take notice of the sad doleful miscarriage of thy heart , thou neglectest the very principal command of God, remainest disobedient, while thou thinkest thou goest on in a way of obedience.

V. Learn

V. Learn what is the general rule, by which we may judge persons to be embracers, or refusers of the Gospel of Christ. The general rule is, whether they appear to be made one with Jesus Christ or no. If fruits can manifest there is an union with Jesus Christ, then we may judge such to be embracers of Christ; But if fruits manifest there is no union with Christ, then can we not charitably judge that they are embracers of the Gospel of Christ for the present.

VI. Hence learn, what the sum, perfection, and highest end of all Scripture is. It is nothing but this, the Lord Christ and the soul made one. It's Christ alone that is the *Alpha* and *Omega* of the Scriptures. Therefore hence we may learn how to read, and hear the Scriptures: The way is to make Christ the *punctum*, the center of every line, that when we find nothing of Christ, we are far from reading the Scripture. Look upon the Types, Ceremonies, Genealogies, all lead to Christ.

VII. Hence learn, what was the end of all those infinite wise counsels of God, from before the foundation of the world was laid. What was the end of all the mysteries of the Gospel, that the Angels desire to pry into? The end of all is to bring souls into union with Jesus Christ.

VIII. Hence learn the reason of the near Sympathy of affection between the Lord Christ, and those souls upon whom the Gospel hath had its right effect. Why is Christs honour, the souls honour, and Christs advancement, the souls advancement? And on the contrary, the affliction of the soul is Christs affliction, the dishonour of the soul is Christs dishonour? The reason is, because the soul is brought into union with the Lord Christ, and where there is such a

nearness of relation, there will be a nearness of affection.

IX. Hence learn the intrinsical, specifical difference between the preaching of the Gospel, and the administration of the Sacraments of the Gospel. The preaching of the Gospel is to draw souls into union with Christ, but the administration of the Sacraments of the Gospel is to manifest communion between souls and Christ already united, 1 Cor. 10. 16. Thence it is that there is a difference to be made between persons that partake of the Sacraments of the Gospel, though not of those that partake of the preaching of the Gospel: Every soul is a futable subject to have the Gospel preached, because every soul by nature is a separated soul, and therefore hath need to be brought into union with Christ: but onely some few souls that are futable subjects, may partake of the Sacraments of the Gospel, because they are those that do manifest a soul to have communion, therefore they presuppose union.

Use II. The second Use is a word of admonition. Seeing the purpose of God in revealing Gospel truths, is to gather souls into union with the Lord Christ, let this warn every soul from heaven, to take heed how he hears the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a good caution the holy Ghost gives, *Eccl. 5. 1. Keep thy foot, when thou goest to the house of God*: He means, take heed and watch over the affections, intents, and purposes of your souls, when you approach near to God in any duty of his worship; Then beware your affections swerve not from God. There are three great miscarriages in coming to Gospel Ordinances.

1. A carelessness, and mindlessness, of the nature, end,

end, and effect of the ordinances of God in approaching to them. It may be said of most souls in a Congregation, as of those *Acts 19. 32. In that great assembly, the most part knew not wherefore they were come together.* Consider of two things in this wretched miscarriage of heart in attending upon the Gospel. First, this heedless frame of spirit is a contempt of God himself. When the great God of heaven and earth, sends a precious Embassage to thy poor loveless soul, and cries to thee, come and be one with me in a Mediator, and thou sit carelessly, neither minding nor regarding the nature of the Embassage, how is it possible for thee to cast higher contempt upon God? Secondly, it is the highest indignity and affront, that can be offered in that kind to the glorious Majesty of heaven and earth.

2. The second great miscarriage of heart, is the taking satisfaction to the soul in attaining other ends by Gospel Ordinances, beneath or without union with the Lord Christ. As when the soul aims at no higher ends than sorrow for sin, or some reformation of life, or drawing the heart to the performance of some duties of worship, as private prayer, reading, or the like; then the heart walks contrary to God in Gospel Ordinances. Here are two things to be considered. First, while thy soul satisfies it self in any of these, thou dost remain a disobedient one to the Gospel of Christ. Let thy sorrow for sin be what it will, let thy reformation be outward, and inward as thou conceivest, the prayers thou performest be what they will, so long as thou takest contentment, without beholding the union compleated between Christ and thy soul, thou art still a disobedient one to the Gospel of Christ: There is not the least dram

of spiritual obedience in all those duties, but the great command being neglected, thou art a rebel still to the Crown of heaven. Secondly, Thou art a stranger to all true Gospel worship, *Without me ye can do nothing, John 15. 5.* Without me, That is, while your souls are disjoyned from me; It is not only meant, without my aid, but without an union with me. Thou art as far from right praying, and hearing in a manner as ever, while thou art void of this union.

3. The third miscarriage is in the order of the workings of the affections towards God in Gospel Ordinances. That is, the fixing the intentions of the soul upon obtaining any other ends through Gospel Ordinances, before obtaining union with the Lord Christ. The soul once sensible of the want of union with Christ, beholding his State a divided estate between Christ and his Soul, many times longs after an union, but propounds to himself a disorderly way of obtaining it; he propounds the gaining of holiness, and holy qualifications, as the means to attain this union with Jesus Christ. Saith the Soul, while I remain thus, it is impossible to gain union; Is it possible such a filthy heart, while it remains thus, should be united to the Lord Christ? Now here I meet with a question that will be propounded by the soul.

Quest. *Is union with Christ, the first intent of God in revealing Gospel truths? Does not the Lord require, there should first be a mortifying of corruption, a drawing the heart from Sin, that there should be a cutting off from the old stock, that it might be ingrafted into the new vine, Jesus Christ?*

Ans. In answering this, there are two things first to be premised.

Premise

Premise 1. First I must premise this, That the revealed will of God, is the onely proper object of the souls faith. So that we are not to enquire whether the Lord may have any secret intent in his own bosom sometimes to lay a soul exceeding low, and rent and tear the heart with sorrow first, as intending to use these terrours in the soul, instrumentally to draw it into union.

Premise 2. Secondly, I must premise, That I speak only of the proper union of the Soul with Christ, when we ask whether it be the first effect the Lord intends the Gospel should have upon the heart. Now these two things premised, I shall answer the question affirmatively, That the first effect that God intends the Gospel should have upon the heart, is the union of the Soul with Jesus Christ. The Lord intends that, before he intends the drawing of the soul from any sin, before he intends the drawing it to any holiness, before he intends so much as to draw it to prayer. There is nothing to be imagined, that the Lord intends to be wrought in the heart by the Gospel of Christ, before the union of the Soul with Christ; and that will appear in four particulars.

1. The Lord propounds the Lord Christ to the soul lying dead in sin, immediately to be received. The voice of the Lord is, Thou poor lost soul, that art now dead in sin, that art utterly lost, do thou hear, and receive the Son of my bosom the Lord Christ, to mediate between thee and me, and to be a *days-man* to lay his hand upon us both: and whereas there is now, a division between thee and me, I will be reconciled to thee, and will be thine, and thou shalt be mine, We have a notable place in *Ezek. 16. 6, 8.* Saith God, *Thy father was an Amorite, and thy*

thy mother was an Hittite, and when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, live; And when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love, [not only wherein he propounded his love, but set his love] then I entred into a Covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. If the Lord enter into Covenant with the soul, while it lies in its blood, and as it is in its blood, the Lord receives it into Covenant, then the Covenant of marriage must needs be propounded to the soul, while it lies thus dead in sin. I might add *Rom. 4. 4, 5, 6. & Rom. 5. 10. Even when we were enemies he did reconcile us to himself; There is the union of agreement held forth: There is no middle state, that God calls the soul unto, between enmity and amity, but there is an immediate passage from enmity into union, into a state of agreement. Therefore saith the Apostle, Eph. 2. 1. Thou hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. If Jesus Christ conveyed life into them, when they were dead; then he was propounded to them as life also, even while they were dead.*

2. There lies an injunction upon the soul at the present, to receive the Lord Christ into union, while he lies dead in his sins. This is the command of God, *that ye believe*, that is, that you receive the Lord Jesus whom he hath sent, and take him into union with your souls; and saith he, *this is the work of God.* Now none deny but the command of receiving Christ into union, lies upon souls dead in sins for the present: And none dare affirm, that God commands the soul to walk in disobedience to his great and highest command, while he should walk in obedience to an inferior

riour command. Now every moment the soul receives not Christ into union, it continues in disobedience: Now who can be so blockish as to conceive, the Lord allows the soul to stay one moment in disobedience to any command? And if so, then the Lord requires that the soul should receive Jesus Christ into union, that moment that he is propounded.

3. It appears, because there can no spiritual act proceed from the soul, without union compleated. Saith Christ *John 15. 5. Without me, [the word is *χωρίς μου*] that is, separate from me ye can do nothing.* The least holy spiritual motion that can be imagined, cannot be put forth by the soul while it remains without union. The dead branches cannot bring forth fruit: saith Christ, *Every branch that is not in me, withereth.* A dead man cannot walk nor move; neither can a dead soul, without union with Jesus Christ, either walk or move in the least measure. So that there cannot be the least step set from one corruption, while the soul remains without union. I deny not but the Lord may cause the branches of sin to be cut off, and the acts of sin to be suspended, through the terrours and horrors of the law, and fear of the wrath of God; but the habit of sin remains the same still, and the enmity works as strongly in the bosom against Jesus Christ as before, though it doth not appear so much: Therefore it is impossible there should be a departing from sin, till the soul be brought into union with Jesus Christ, much less that it should be acting any holiness, or performing any spiritual duty whatsoever. Now in regard the Lord requires the soul, at the same moment that he receives the Gospel, to depart from all

iniquity, and requires all spiritual duties in their perfection, therefore the Lord requires the means to be performed by the soul, to yield obedience to the great command, that is, the receiving Jesus Christ into union.

4. There are no degrees tending to the perfection of the union of the soul with Christ, nor nothing that can in its own nature tend in an orderly way to the procuring of that union of the soul with Christ. I deny not, but the Lord may according to his own pleasure, use and imploy many things, as antecedents going before this union; but after the effecting of all these things in the heart, that thou conceivest tend in order to union with Jesus Christ, the soul is no nearer union than it was before any of these things were effected in the heart. The reason is plain, there is no medium between union and separation and disjunction; The nearest point the soul can stand at is enmity; Now all that can be effected in the heart, before compleating union, takes not away the enmity; The soul moralized, or civilized, humbled and brought to prayer, is still an enemy: There is but *terminus à quo*, and *ad quem*, the term from which and the term to which, without any medium, or middle State: Nay there is no degree of the union, but a soul passeth from a State of enmity to perfect union in one instant, in one moment: That soul that this moment, was an enemy, at an infinite distance from God; the next moment, the Lord coming in by an inevitable light into the understanding, and irresistible power into the will, is as compleatly united to Christ as any soul in heaven.

Use III. The third use is by way of examination, to see if the precious Gospel truths have had their effects upon our hearts: And to this end search into your hearts to see whether you be united to Jesus Christ. Either you are united to Christ, or you are not united; Either you are sinking in the depths of sin, or you are upon the rock Christ, and all depends upon the knowing of this. Consider these three or four things.

I. What a cursed stupidity and blockishness 'tis, not to know whether Jesus Christ be united to thee, or at a distance from thee. Would we not think that man a block, that knows not whether he be alive or dead?

II. Consider how cursedly thou dost despise the Lord Christ. Wilt thou ride an hundred miles to make sure of an earthly estate, and shall the great treasure of heaven stand open to thee, and either 'tis thine, or 'tis not thine, and thou knowest not?

III. Consider how wretchedly thy soul destroys the vertue of all Gospel Ordinances, by disregarding this search. While thy soul perseveres carelessly, not regarding nor examining whether Jesus Christ be one with thee; impossible it is that any of the most powerful Gospel Ordinances, should ever convey the least benefit into thy Soul; And that in two respects.

1. In that thou makest thy self an unsutable subject for every Gospel Ordinance. Ordinances have but two ends, either to allure thy soul into union, or else to seal that union, and let thy soul enjoy that blessed fruit thereof. Now whilst thou never mindest whether Christ be one with thee or no, thou art unsutable for every Ordinance of that kind.

2. Thou

2. Thou preventest the efficacy of every Gospel Ordinance upon thy soul. What concernment is it of to thy soul, when the most precious arguments of love are set forth, by the mouth of a messenger of God, when thou mindest it not? First, it prevents the efficacy of all Gospel Ordinances, in regard there can be no sense of the want of union, while thy soul neglects the search. Till the prodigal came to consider he was from his fathers house, where there was bread enough; he had no desire to return, but was content to feed upon husks. Secondly, there can be no sense of the Lords choosing thy soul into union. Though the sense of the want of union, be of absolute necessity to every soul, before Gospel Ordinances take effect, yet this is not sufficient; ~~some think~~ there must be a sense of the Lords choosing of the soul, before the soul can close in union with Christ, and till then there can never be a consent of the will. Now how can there be a sense of the Lords choosing thee into union, when thou mindest not whether thou beest already united to Christ or no?

IV. Consider how wrongfully thou usurpest the name of a Christian to thy self, when thou regardest not whether union between Christ and thy Soul be made up. The name of a Christian at least presupposeth an union of peace, then it presupposeth a time when it was made up; and if such an union be not made up, thou dost wrongfully usurp that holy name to thy self.

But here may be a Question propounded by the Soul.

Questi

Quest. How shall I know, whether I be united to Christ or no? Or what is it that may evidence the souls union?

I shall first premise two or three things, and then give an answer to the question.

Premise 1. First I shall premise, That the union between the Lord Christ and the Soul, may be invisible to the Soul it self. Though the marriage knot may be knit, yet the soul may not be able to discern it. The rational soul is united to the body of a poor infant in the womb, while it is a poor Embrio, yet the rational soul knows it not, through the weakness of the organs by which it should work: Thus it may be with the soul: It may be begotten to the Lord Christ by his spirit, and yet the soul being but a babe in Christ, through the imperfection of knowledge, may not be able to discern himself united to Christ.

Premise 2. Secondly I must premise, That there may be a true and real union, between Christ and the soul, and yet the soul may discern many disorders, and sad miscarriages in it self, when the union was effected or produced in that soul. The Apostles themselves, at their first embracing of Christ, had strange conceits of a temporal kingdom of Christ, and yet no question the union between Christ and their souls was real, only through want of clearness of light, many disorderly affections were in them, which were set in order afterwards.

Premise 3. Thirdly I must premise also, That there is a vast difference to be observed between arguments, or confirming signs of union with Christ, and evidences of union with Christ. Those properly

ly are called evidences, that do in their proper nature discover union whenever they are present ; So that when such things are present, the soul cannot question his union with Christ. And those cannot properly be called evidences, that are not able to clear up union with Christ, whenever they are present in the soul : Now of that nature are many holy dispositions, and holy qualities in the soul, that may be present in the soul, and not able to clear up the souls union ; yet these are evidences, that may and do clear unquestionably, whenever the Lord discovers them. The Question you ask is a great question ; The question is, how we shall know our union with Christ ? That is, how we may attain evidences of union, our union either being dark or doubtful, or else never had clear evidences ? You that have it, do not ask how you shall have it confirmed more and more, but how you shall have evidences of your union. Now I shall answer, First, Negatively, how you may not. Secondly, Affirmatively, how you may.

Neg. First, negatively, how you may not, in three or four things.

Ans. 1. First, the souls union with Christ cannot be evidenced from any work of the spirit of God, that is effected in, or upon the soul. That is neither by his Illumination, Humiliation, or Reformation. Neither by a restraining work from sin, or preventing work of sin, or alluring work from sin, that the spirit of God hath effected upon the soul. All these works are too weak to clear up union to the soul, and that upon three grounds.

1. In regard all the works of the Spirit upon the Soul that do go before Union, may be, and are wrought upon Souls that never obtain Union with the Lord Christ. As Humiliation, sorrow for Sin, restraint from Sin, some kind of turning the Heart away from Sin, some kind of love to the Ordinances of God; All those that go before the very instant wherein the Soul is United to Christ, may be effected in many Souls that never obtain Union. Nay they may be, and appear greater, in many Souls that never obtained Union, than in Souls that attain unto Union with Christ. And in regard those works of the Spirit upon Souls, are common to Souls that are not United, as well as to Souls United, thence they are no Evidences of a Souls Union. Whatever must evidence Union to a Soul, must be proper and peculiar to Souls United, that it may be properly said, that no Souls that are not compleatly United to Christ, can have such a work upon their Hearts. Now no such work goes before immediate union, but may be common to a Soul never United to Christ. For Conviction of Sin, and Sorrow for Sin, I might instance in *Judas*. In reformation and desire to Ordinances, we need go no further than a Wretched *Herod*, Mark 6. 20. *He heard John Baptist gladly, and reformed many things*. For a Souls Mourning after God apparently, we may see it in *Esau*: A Soul out of the sense of want of Union may Mourn most bitterly: Now in regard of the Commonality of the works to Souls not United, as well as unto Souls United, they can be no Evidences of Union.

2. In regard these works of the Spirit upon the Soul, can yield no Divine Witness, or Testimony unto the poor doubting Soul. Indeed all the works of

God Originelly are Divine Works, and Works of Divine Power, yet they have no Power to yield a Divine Testimony : Now nothing can be a sufficient ground for the Soul to believe its Union with Christ, unless it be a Divine ground. The proper object of all Divine Faith must be a Divine ground : If it be a Fallible Ground, it is a Fallible Faith ; if an uncertain Ground, it is an uncertain Faith ; if a Humane Ground, it is a Humane Faith. Now in case upon those grounds (as the sight of such works of the Spirit of God) the Soul should believe its Union with Christ, it should not believe it with a Divine Faith, because there is no Divine ground to believe it upon.

3. In regard there is no promise of Union with Jesus Christ, made by God unto Souls that have these works of the Spirit of God upon them : That is, no promise to the Soul that is Burdened with Sin or the like ; I mean thus, the Lord doth not engage in any of these promises, to Souls that had such and such Works of the Spirit of God upon them, that those he would bring into Union, and none but those ; That is, because my Soul is burdened with Sin, or because the Spirit of God hath now convinced my Soul, in this or that manner, that therefore I have right to such and such a promise. No, these Promises are made to Souls in reference to Union with Christ, that by Union with Jesus Christ, I might have right to these Promises, and to the effecting those Qualifications in the Soul too.

Ans. 2. Secondly we cannot evidence our Union, by any thing inherent in the Soul : That is, not by any gracious Quality, Habit, Inclination, or Disposition, that is infused from God into the Soul. The

Graces

Graces of the Spirit Communicated to the Soul, and dwelling in it, are as insufficient to manifest and evidence this interest in Christ, as the workings of the Spirit upon the Soul, I mean all holy Dispositions, and Inclinations that are Communicated to any Soul. And that upon these grounds.

1. In regard of the neer similitude and likeness of Counterfeit Qualities, and Graces, to all those Holy Qualities, and Graces, and Habits that can be discovered in a Soul. The Devil hath his Artists at work, as well as the Spirit of God is at work ; and there is no precious Jewel of Grace the Spirit frames in the Soul, but the Devils Artists can Counterfeit a Jewel of as neer Similitude as possible, only to delude poor Souls : Yea there is such a neeriness of likeness in those false Dispositions, to those True Precious Holy Qualities, as the imperfect sight of the Soul cannot possibly discern the difference, when the Union of the Soul is dark. As to instance in Poverty of Spirit, which is an emptiness of the Soul of all Confidence in it self, being nothing in its own eyes : Mark what a neer Counterfeit the Devils Artists can make cursed Pride of Spirit, so as it can scarce be discerned, nay so neer, as the Soul commonly mistakes. A Soul is convinced of Sin, and moved to accept of the Lord Christ tendred : Now comes the Devil ; What such a Cursed Wretch as thou art receive the Lord Christ tendred ? The Lord Christ is of Holy, Pure, Unde-filed eyes, *purer than to behold Iniquity* ; Canst think the Lord will accept of such a forlorn Soul as thine, that hath so cursedly Rebelled against him ? O no, saith the Soul, I dare not conceive God will look upon me, who am such a Cursed Wretch : Alas poor Soul, thou thinkest this to be Poverty of Spirit, when

indeed it is Curfed Pride : Thou wouldest have some ground of Confidence in thy self, that the Lord should accept of thee, and thou thinkest it great Humility in thy self, like another *Peter*, *what Jesus Christ Wash my Feet ?* Now what neer likeness is here between this Pride of Spirit, and Poverty of Spirit ? All the difference is here, that the Soul that is truly poor, desires never to have any thing in himself to rest upon ; The Soul hath no hope of ever having any thing as it is in itself, and alas this difference is hardly discerned. Thus also if you go to Sincerity of Obedience : Saith the Soul, though I do fail in my purposes, yet I hope my Heart is sincere towards God in all that I do, and that is given as another evidence of the Souls Union. I say it is true, but the question is, how we shall discern it from the meer working of Ignorance ? Sincerity is a single eye to the Will of God, and to his Honour and Glory in what thou doest ; but according to the Souls Judgment, a Soul acted meerly by the principle of Ignorance, may have a single eye at Gods Glory, *Rom. 10. 2, 3.* The *Jews* had a Zeal for God, but not according to knowledge ; and so they went about to establish their own Righteousness : Hence the Soul will say I think I have Sincerity of heart, but I do not certainly know, I may be deceived. Thus in these chief things there is such a nearness, that we can scarce discern the Jewel from the Counterfeit.

II. In regard those holy Dispositions, Inclinations, and Habits of Grace, do properly proceed from some kind of evidence of a Souls Union, and according to the clearness of the Souls evidence of Union, so do these Graces increase, and according

as the Souls Union is eclipsed, so do they decrease. To begin with that, which most promises seem to be made to, that is to *Mourners*. Whence does true Mourning for Sin in the Soul proceed? Is it not from a sight of the Lord Christ? Yea, from some sight of the Souls propriety in Christ, at least thus far, from some sight of probable interest in Christ. Is it not from thence the Soul beholds first the cursed nature of Sin? Indeed the horridness of the nature of Sin never appears, but in the precious glass of the Lords Bowels of Mercy to poor Loveless Souls.

III. In regard the right nature and truth of those Holy Qualities, or Habits of Grace in the Soul, cannot be discerned but from the sight of the Union of the Soul with Christ. And that in these respects.

1. In regard there is not a full conformity in those Holy Qualities inherent in thy Heart, to the rule of the Word that doth command those Holy Qualities. Should I begin at the lowest, which is Sincerity of heart in the Souls Obedience unto God: The Soul can seldom (I might say never) see a Conformity in his Obedience to the rule of the word; The rule is in *Eph. 6. 5, 6.* (it is spoken concerning Servants, but it holdeth in every duty.) *Servants be Obedient to them that are your Masters according to the Flesh, with fear and Trembling, in singleness of your Heart as unto Christ, not with eye-Service as men-pleasers, but as the Servants of Christ, doing the Will of God from the Heart.* True Sincerity in Obedience to any command, it is a singleness of Heart unto Jesus Christ; a single eye, that is, having respect to nothing but Christ alone; The *species* of all the vision of that eye with which he respects the duty, being taken from Jesus Christ alone. Now how far short shall a Soul

see it self in a conformity to the rule? When can the soul say his heart was single to Christ in prayer, or in any Ordinance? Now in regard the soul may behold at all times, so great a difference in the holy qualities inherent in his heart, to the rule that it ought to be brought to a full conformity to; those holy qualities in the heart cannot evidence unto the soul the truth of its union with Christ. The truth of them cannot appear in themselves without a sight of the souls union, in regard of the imperfection of the souls sight, to discern the depths of his own heart. Any knowing soul judgeth it self to be far unable to search the depths of his own heart, *Jer. 17, 9. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* Thence it is, the soul hath never sufficient evidence of the truth of any holy quality in himself, from the quality it self, to answer all the objections of a carnal heart, because that remains unanswered, *the heart is deceitful.*

2. In regard the truth of those holy qualities appear only as they do proceed from faith. Therefore unless the soul discerns, and knows them to be fruits of faith, it cannot conclude them to be holy qualities, *Hebr. 11: 6. Without faith it is impossible to please God;* Now he that discerns faith, discerns union with Christ, therefore it must needs be, that there is a sight of union, before a sight of the truth of those holy qualities.

Ans. 3. The third negative answer is this, That the union of the soul with Christ, cannot be evidenced by any thing done, or effected by the soul, or that can be effected and done. Whether we look upon works internal, or works external; whether we look upon the inward moving of the affections to

to God, or whether we look upon the expressions of these affections, that is, the breaking out of those affections into prayer, and constant intercessions with God, into reading, and hearing, and attending upon ordinances, into holiness expressed in the conversation, by none of these can the union with Jesus Christ be cleared and evidenced. Yet for the right understanding of this, these three things are to be considered.

1. I do not mean, that no work of the soul, either inward or outward, done by the soul, is an evidence of the souls union with Christ. Though no work of the soul be able to clear the union, and evidence it, yet the work may be an evidence in it self. The inward act of Faith is an infallible evidence of the souls union, where the soul is able to understand that act of Faith, to be of the right nature the word of God requires Faith to be in the Soul.

2. I do not mean neither in this conclusion, that the union of the soul with Christ may be evidenced, without the souls beholding any work, either inward or outward in it self. For infallibly, and necessarily, in the souls beholding its union with the Lord Christ, it does behold some workings in its spirit also, some holy act in, and upon Jesus Christ; At the same time the soul beholds its union with Jesus Christ, it beholds its receiving Jesus Christ, which is an act of Faith.

3. The meaning of the conclusion is this, That no works, either inward, or outward, performed by the soul, have sufficient light in themselves, to manifest themselves unto the soul; nor from themselves and their own nature, to manifest the union of the soul with Christ. Though there is an inward act of

soul, that is an inseparable evidence of the souls union, which is the act of Faith; yet that act of Faith in it self considered, as is is the meer act and work of the soul, hath not sufficient light in it self, to discover it self to the soul, that it is the inseparable act of the souls union: Likewise is every work of the soul, inward, or outward, of the same nature. The works of the soul may be works of light, and yet the beams of light shine so dimly forth, as they cannot discover their own nature to the soul; they cannot discover themselves to be those works that the Scripture holds forth to be the infallible consequence of the souls union with Christ. And that the works of the soul have not sufficient light in themselves to discover union, will appear in divers respects.

1. Because all the works of the soul united to Christ, may be present in the soul, when the union of the soul with Christ is obscure and dark. The act of Faith, that is the most eminent effect of the souls union with Christ, may be very strong in the soul, when the soul may be yet dark. A clear instance will be given in *Mat. 27. 46.* by the Captain of our Salvation, who believed when he hung upon the Cross, and exercised Faith in God, as appears in those words, *My God*; yet the union between Jesus Christ and God the Father, as Mediator, was dark, that made him cry out, *My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* The hypostatical union was firm, and as firm as now it is in heaven, but the manifestation of that union was obscure, when the Lord Christ did bear the greatest burden of the consequence of sin, that was possible, in bearing the sense of the absence of God from him for a season.

2. It appears in regard the union between Christ and

and the soul is only passive. The union is compleat between Jesus Christ and the soul, before any one act goes forth from the soul unto Christ. It is impossible there should be the least motion of the soul towards the perfecting, or compleating of the union between Christ and the soul, unless we could conceive there may be motions in dead persons, that there may be action where there is no life. Now the union being passive, there may be a manifestation of the union, between Jesus Christ and the soul at the same time, at the same moment that the union between Christ and the soul is compleated : I do not say it is ordinary, but I say there may be a sight of the Lord Christ, coming down into the heart, in that instant, and moment, wherein Jesus Christ does take actual possession of the heart, and unite it unto himself : Now in case the union of the soul should be so evidenced with Christ, then should all works, either inward or outward in the soul, be excluded from having any interest in the manifestation of that union.

3. In regard the same kind of works that do arise properly from the union of the soul with Christ, (though not peculiarly) may arise from other principles where there is no union. There are three false originals of such outward works.

(1.) God himself may be the Original of such works in some souls, though not by vertue of union, nor in relation unto union. That is, though the Lord convey not any influences, that are the proper influences peculiar unto union, nor though the Lord does not convey those influences into the soul, from whence those outward works proceed to bring the soul into union with Jesus Christ. Prayer and revealing

vealing the truths of God, and reading of them, and all outward works of a soul, may be produced by God in the soul, only in relation to other souls that are already united to himself.

The Lord may convey large streams of gifts, and inward affections unto some souls, and excite them to the imploying of all those gifts, in all outward works of his own worship, only in respect to the good of his own peoples souls, when the Lord intends not any benefit to the soul that partakes of those gifts. Thus the Lord dealt with *Cyrus*, *Isa. 45. 1.* and *Chap. 44. 28.* *Thus saith the Lord to Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built, and to the Temple, thy foundation shall be laid.* The Lord did convey strength to *Cyrus*, to carry him on in a glorious work of reforming his worship, and to build the Temple, when the Lord intended no good to *Cyrus*, I mean so as to bring his soul into union with Christ. Thus God furnished *Jehn* with Zeal against Idolatry, for the good of his peoples souls, and it redounded little to the good of his soul. For ought we know, *Judas* was furnished with as good gifts as the rest of the Apostles, and seemed to pray with as much earnestness, and publish the truths of Christ with as much Zeal as any of the Apostles; whereas none of those gifts that *Judas* had, were conveyed by vertue of the union of his soul with Christ, nor were given with an intent to bring his soul into union.

(2.) A second false original of such works is the souls own principle of self. Self ends, self lusts, self intendments, may be like the spring that may set all the wheels of the affections on work, and produce all those outward expressions in the work of God.

God. Certainly it was one of the chief intentions in the Pharisees, in all their works of holiness, and strictness in their conversation, that they might advance themselves outwardly, and to eternity, and thought to tie God to give them heaven for it.

(3.) The third false original of works that properly flow from union, is from the Devil himself. The workings of prayer, of hearing, of meditating, or forsaking sin in the conversation, may come from the Devil himself, he taking his opportunity to sail with the wind, and row with the tide; He seeing the Affections work towards duties of holiness, he presses with all his might to the performance of them, that he might weary out the soul with them, or else cause the confidence of the soul to be placed in them, and the soul to promise it self happiness by them. Certainly the Zeal of *Paul* that he had for God, and the law of God, was acted by the Devil himself. And *Saul* that was so Zealous to offer sacrifice before he went to battle, it was from the Devil. Those souls that are pressed so violently unto prayer, as they will neglect their callings to multiply duties of prayer; I question not, though such excitations come from conscience to urge them, yet they are originally from the Devil himself; And certainly many a soul hath found the sad effect of the Devil in it, in causing the soul to be weary of all duties, and to cast them off. Now in regard the original of the souls works that it performs, is thus questionable, whether they have their original from the souls union with Christ, or from one of these false principles; Thence these works are not sufficient in themselves, to manifest the souls union with Christ. The question must first be answered, whether

whether these duties flow from union with Christ or no? before the other question can be answered, whether those works be the proper effects of union? And till that question be answered, the soul can never conclude from his works, that he is united to Jesus Christ.

4. Nothing that is done by the soul can manifest the souls union, in regard the union of the soul with Christ cannot be concluded from works, as a necessary truth, grounded upon an unchangeable, and infallible reason. That is the great distinction between opinion and knowledge; That knowledge is the apprehension of a truth, flowing necessarily from an unchangeable ground, whereas opinion flows onely from a probable ground. Now the works of the soul can never be an unchangeable ground, from whence the soul can conclude himself to be united to Christ in three regards.

(1.) In regard no work simply considered in it self, without respect to its original, can be concluded to be a fruit or consequence of the souls union. The same kind of work may be performed from a false original, as well by vertue of influences from the Devil into our hearts, as from God; Therefore till it discern that the original is from Christ, that it was by the very motion, and stirring of Christ in the heart, that the work was done, the soul cannot conclude it to be a consequence of his union; Now so long as the work cannot appear to be a consequence of the souls union, there can be no infallible ground to conclude that he is united to Jesus Christ.

(2.) In regard no works can manifest union, but such as are the peculiar and inseperable effects of the souls union with Christ. Now no soul can discern his
works

works to be the peculiar inseparable effect of union, unless he can discern and conclude his soul shall continue and persevere to the end in those works: But now no Soul can discern, or conclude from any thing, but from a promise of the God of truth which is only unchangable, that he shall persevere in any Holy work whatever; and no Soul can lay claim to any promise, till he can claim right to Union with Jesus Christ, therefore no Soul can see his perseverance in any such work, till he see his Union with Christ.

3. In regard the Judgment that the Soul passeth upon those works, is a deceivable Judgment. The heart being a bottomless depth that is unsearchable, the nature of all his works cannot be discerned by the weak capacity of the Soul; thence the Soul cannot draw that conclusion from them, as a certain consequence of his Union with Christ.

Ans. 4. Neither can the Union of the Soul with Christ be thus evidenced, from the outward Revelation of the nature and manner, of the Union of the Soul with Christ. I do not mean, that the Union of the Soul with Christ, may not be evidenced by the revelation of the nature and manner of the Union of the Soul with Christ: The Lord Christ doth ordinarily through those Revelations of his truth, cause the impression of truth to remain upon Spirits; The Lord by revealing to Souls, a Union to be attained by Christ, ordinarily draws Souls into Union, and by declaring the nature and manner of the Union, doth ordinarily discover to Souls thus their Union with Christ: Yet the nature and manner of the revelation of the Union, considered in themselves, is not enough barely considered in themselves to manifest the Union. And that will appear in three things.

1. Be-

I. Because those outward Revelations reach no higher than Reasons eye. Now while the light of Truth pierce no farther than the eye of Reason, the right Consequences of it, are never effected in the Soul. That's the reason that the revelation of the sweetest perswasions of God to allure Souls into Union, take no effect upon the Heart of knowing persons, because those outward Revelations reach but to Reasons eye ; and therefore they must hear and learn of the Father before they come to Christ. *John 6. 45.* In the same manner is the Revelation of the Union to Souls United, as insufficient to satisfy the Soul concerning his Union, as those other Revelations of the Lords will to draw Souls into Union.

1. In regard the truth to be apprehended, which is the Souls particular Union with Christ, is far beyond Reasons Comprehension. Now while the light reacheth no higher than to Reasons eye, Reason not being able to comprehend the truth, needs must the truth be inefficacious.

2. All the Wranglings and Objections of the Soul against his Union, remain in full Power, notwithstanding those Revelations to the eye of Reason. Till a higher light be set up in the Soul, to be Lord Controller as it were of Reason, the Soul is never able to believe, that is, to receive Christ into Union.

II. In regard those communicate no light to the eye, to which those truths are propounded. As it is at first in the Lords Conviction of a Soul by the truth, the outward revealing of it is insufficient, in regard there is no light by those revealings to convey it to the Souls eye ; for though the truth be made clear and apparent, the eye is still blind, therefore the Soul is not Convinced : So it is in revealing to the Soul

Soul its Union, the Revelation is insufficient, in regard there is no beam of light comes to the Souls eye: And though the eye of the Soul have received light from Heaven, yet the light to discern the Souls Union, must be a new light.

III. In regard United Souls that fully understand both the nature and manner of Union, may be, and are frequently yet unsatisfied about their Union. Questionless poor *Heman* (in *Psal.* 88.) knew well what it was to be accepted of God in Christ, and to be one with him, and yet was far from apprehending himself to be United, but gave up himself for a dead man. *David* when he made that 22 *Psalms*, typically speaking of Christ (though applying it to his own condition) knew well enough what it was to have the Lord to be his, and did hang upon him; yet he cried out, fearing God had forsaken him. Now if the outward Revelation of the nature, and manner of the Souls Union with Christ, were enough to make the Soul understand its Union; then there were no united Soul, that did hear the relation of it, and did carefully reflect upon his own heart, but must be satisfied about his union; but our experience tells us this, that the most understanding Souls about union, are hardest to be satisfied about their union. Thus you have the negative part of the answer opened. Now before I proceed to the affirmative, there is another question will be cast in upon the neck of this.

Que. 1. But may the Soul say, If none of these can evidence to the Soul his Union with Christ, are all those Souls evidences of Union that they have received, from something thus inherent in themselves, and done upon them by the Spirit of God, rotten and unsound, and no evidences? Must we now cast away all our thoughts
of

of union with Jesus Christ, that were formerly gathered from the sight of such qualifications inherent in our souls?

Before I come to answer this question, I must first premise two or three things.

1. That the soul hath not conceived either qualities inherent in his soul, or works done by his soul, as the cause of his union with God in Christ. That these should be the uniting means between Christ and thy soul, that have drawn the Lord Christ to come into thy heart, and to dwell in thee, and so to cause thee to dwell in him. This were no less than gross Popery, to make any thing in our selves the cause of union.

2. I also premise, That thou hast not taken qualities inherent in thy self, or works done by thy self, as the ground upon which thou didst believe thy union with Christ. This were a very dangerous sandy foundation for a soul to build upon: This were to ground a divine faith upon an humane ground, to ground a certain conclusion upon a poor changeable ground; And this were to make thy faith of no longer lasting, than the constancy of thine heart in such works, or the constancy of thy sight in beholding such dispositions in thy heart; This is both unsafe, and exceeding dangerous.

3. I must premise, That thou mistakest not the ground of thy evidence, conceiving thy self to receive thy evidence from qualities inherent in thy self, or works done by thy self, when thou receivest it from a promise of free grace alone. It may be at the same time, when the Lord declared to thee his willingness to accept of thy soul into union with Christ, and let thee see thine heart closing with that graci-

ous tender; he at the same time lets thee see such holy dispositions in thy soul as the consequence of thy union, thence it may be thou didst conclude thy evidence was from these, when it was from something in the first place before works.

But if the question be demanded, whether thy qualifications thus considered be evidences?

I answer negatively, and affirmatively.

First, they are no right kind of evidences.

1. They are no evidences of Faith. That which is an evidence unto the eye of Faith, must be some truth of God revealed unto faith, with such an authority, that for the authority of the speaker, and revealer of that truth, the soul doth believe it, and close with it. Now in that manner, the word alone is proper evidence unto faith. Assurance of faith must always have a divine ground, to build upon: Now there is no divine ground, but a divine word; and thine own dispositions and graces are no divine, but a humane ground.

2. They are no evidence of knowledge. Knowledge is the assent of the understanding to a necessary truth, built upon an unchangeable ground or reason. Now the union of thy soul with Christ could never be rightly taken as a necessary truth, built upon thine own works, as the unchangeable reason of it; For (as you have heard) no works done by the soul can be an unchangeable reason upon which a soul may build such a truth as this, that he is united unto Christ, in regard thou wert never yet fully certain of the right nature of those thy works, or of those dispositions in thy soul, from whence thou didst gather those thoughts of thy union with Christ.

Secondly, I answer affirmatively, they may be improperly called evidences, and they may have begotten an evidence of opinion in thy soul, though not an evidence of knowledge. Opinion is the assent of the understanding to some truth propounded, upon the sight of probable grounds and reasons of the truth of the thing propounded. Now the sight of thy gracious dispositions and qualifications may be an evidence of opinion to thy soul, that is, they may have afforded some probable arguments of thy union with Christ; And from thence may have flown these three effects of it.

1. Thence may have risen a quiet and calm in the soul, a cessation from those perturbations and tumults, the soul was disquieted with formerly.

2. Hence might flow some refreshments. A hope of possibility to the poor sinking soul brings admirable refreshment: Much like a man being ready to suffer Ship-wrack at Sea, seeing but a ship coming towards him, gives him hope of being taken in.

3. From hence may arise some sitting joy. Though Christ do but pass by as it were, and the soul does but see his face through a crevis, it refresheth his heart.

Thus far they may be evidences of opinion unto souls: But there are divers things that must be noted about this evidence of opinion least we mistake. For though I dare not say but these evidences of opinion in many souls, may prove such, that in the utmost issue of them may hold to eternity, yet it is not without great danger, to the safety and comfort of such souls. Therefore observe,

I. That these evidences of opinion in souls, do yet fall short of raising those souls, into a full conformity

formity to the rules of Scripture, about and concerning evidences of union. And that will appear in three things.

1. In regard these evidences of opinion cannot rise to that fulness of certainty, and that strength of confidence, that the rules concerning evidences of a souls union, do require souls to be raised to. When this opinion is raised to the highest degree, there cannot be a full certainty: Now the Scripture requires souls to attain a full confidence about their union with Christ, *Heb. 10. 22.*

2. In regard the foundation of the souls consolation in these evidences, is laid upon a ground disagreeing to the rule. The rule is onely the will of God revealed; Now the will of God revealed is, that there should be immutable grounds upon which the soul should be built, *Heb. 6. 17, 18.*

3. In regard the consolation of the soul, is unsuitable in measure and degree, to that which God intends for his peoples souls. He intends full consolations to them, a plerophery of consolation. But how weak are those comforts, that flow from those weak fluctuating inherent grounds of the souls qualities, or the working of those qualities?

II. You must note about these evidences of opinion, That no soul may justly satisfy or content it self, with only those evidences of opinion. Perfection of conformity to Scripture rule, is the command and injunction that lies upon every soul: Now these evidences of opinion being attained, and yet the soul falls short of Scripture rules; thence it necessarily follows, that no soul may, or ought, to content it self with those evidences.

III. You must note, That the seeking after, and walk-

walking by these evidences of opinion only, do expose the soul to the want of all props, supports, and comforts, in the greatest necessities of the soul. These evidences are like the little Brook the Prophet *Elisha* sat down by, when he went from *Jezebel*, that ran only in the beginning of the famine, and after was dry. Or rather they are like *Jonah's* Gourd, (*Jonah* 4. 6.) of which the poor man was exceeding glad for a night and felt the shadow of it, but when the Sun arose, a worm struck the Gourd, and *Jonah* was exposed to the heat of the Sun. Thus may the evidences of the soul from inherent qualities, and the working of those qualities, be like a precious Gourd for a season, where the soul may have refreshments, but if the Sun gets to the mid heavens, and there come any scorching heat, then do they vanish like *Jonah's* Gourd, and the soul is exposed to a comfortless, hopeless condition for eternity.

There are four great necessities of the soul, when it hath the greatest need of evidences, and in all these the evidence of opinion fails the soul.

1 When any Sin in the heinousness of its guilt, and the dreadfulfulness of its merit and desert, is charged upon the conscience. When Sin comes once to be thus charged, it causeth all the evidences of opinion to vanish and perish, and leaves the soul comfortless. As it was with *David*, *Psal.* 51. 3. he cries out, *My sin is ever before me*: Or as it was with poor *Job*, Chap. 13. 26, 27, *Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me possess the iniquities of my youth*. Now when the soul is either in *Job's* case, or *David's* case, that any iniquity comes thus before the soul, then is a soul in great necessity of union with *Christ*: When a debt comes to be charged upon a person,

person, and the Bayliff comes to arrest him, then there is necessity of some bayl; now conscience comes to arrest the soul, and offers to carry it into hell, and now do those evidences of opinion from the souls graces, leave the soul hopeless, and helpless: The thing is evident, when conscience is thus charging an iniquity upon the soul, it becomes Witness, and Advocate, and Judg: It witnesseth the fact to be done, it pleads the fact condemnation, and pronounceth the sentence.

2. The second great necessity is, when some strong master corruption leads the soul captive; and even keeps the poor distressed soul in chains. You must know, though the reigning power of sin be destroyed in souls united to Christ, (*Rom. 6. 14.*) yet the tyrannizing power of sin is not destroyed: Though sin cannot have the Throne of the will, to sit there as Lord Commander, yet it will be always striving for the Throne; then is the soul in great straits, and knows not what to do without evidence of union with Christ, that he knows he shall be conqueror over such a corruption: Now in this condition, the inherent qualities of the soul, and the works of sanctification, leave the soul helpless and comfortless; now the eye of the soul is upon corruption, and it is hard for him at that time to discern grace.

3. Another great exigency of the soul for the evidence of his union, is when the influences of the quickning spirit are suspended from the soul. When not only a state of deadness is grown upon the heart, but as with those *Psal. 80. 4.* God seems to be angry with their prayers, and comes not in; That the soul begins to complain, as in *Lament. 3. 44*, that the Lord shuts out his prayers; or complain as

Job, Chap. 23. 8, 9. *Behold I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him, &c.* Then is the soul in great extremity, that now unless there be some grounds of evidence of union, the soul begins to be hopeless, and altogether comfortless; And alas when the soul is brought to this exigency, then doth its evidence of opinion from its own grace fail, and the soul questions whether it ever drew a right conclusion.

4. The fourth extremity is, When the Lord delivers the soul to the buffetings of Satan for a season. When Satan begins to use all his policy to shake the foundations of the soul, to make his hope and faith to shake; when the Devil chargeth his Cannons against the soul, and letteth loose all temptations at once; blasphemous thoughts come into the heart, questioning whether there be a God or no, and the soul can meddle with nothing, but one blasphemous thought or other comes upon the soul, and it knows not from whence they come: And when Satan is thus buffeting the soul, then a mans inherent graces, and the workings of them that he saw before, do now fail the soul, in regard Satan in this case first strikes at the strongest hold, he strikes at the foundation, he strikes at union with Christ.

4. There is a fourth note about evidences of opinion; That the souls cleaving unto them, doth make the certainty of the truth of God increase and diminish, according to the increasing and diminishing of the workings of his soul, and of the influence of the spirit of God upon his heart. Experience it self teacheth us, that while our souls take our evidences from those qualifications, so long as we find the spirit of God working lively in our hearts, our hopes

hopes are lively, and our confidence firm; and no sooner these cease again, but our confidence and our hope fail; then the Soul questions again whether Jesus Christ be tendred to his Soul in particular? whereas before he had some confidence of it.

5. There is a fifth note about these evidences of opinion, and that is this, That the cleaving unto those evidences of opinion, doth make the whole life and comfort of the soul depend only upon sense. When the soul trusts to those alone, he trusts only the eye of sense, both in seeing his happiness for the present, and for eternity. Now from thence,

First, The fulness of the souls consolation is prevented. The soul, as it were, shuts the great window, which is the evidence of grace in the promise unto the soul, and only opens the small crevis of sense and experience: Now needs must the fulness of light in the house be prevented, when the greatest window is shut voluntarily; And much more is the comfort of the soul prevented, when the great window of comfort is shut.

Secondly, The constancy of consolation is prevented. The soul may both see the Lords will to be unchangeable towards him, in taking him into union, and may see the command of God to his soul to believe that his union, and receive the promise of God to take his soul into union, when the soul can see nothing of those precious workings of grace in his own heart: So that the constancy of the souls consolation, depends not upon the evidence that he can receive, either from the inherent graces in him, or the working of those graces, but upon that which is constant in it self, when the heart is unconstant.

Thirdly, Thence the soul walks contrary to the Scripture rule. The rule is, *to walk by faith*, 2 Cor. 5. 7. *and to live by faith rather than by sight*: But when the soul adheres only to, and seeks after the evidence of his union from the working of his own graces, the soul seeks to live and walk only by sight, and not by faith.

Now there is a second Question that will arise, before I can pass to the affirmative answer.

Quest. 2. *If those inherent qualities and habits of grace in souls, and the workings of them, cannot thus evidence the souls union primarily, nor be no better grounds of evidence than this: Then why do the Scriptures propound the souls obedience unto God, and love unto God, as signs and evidences of the souls union with Christ?*

Ans. For the answer of this question, there are divers things to be considered.

1. Many of the Scriptures, that the soul conceives to lay down such graces, and workings of graces, as signs of the souls union, are onely laid down as manifest signs of their union with Christ unto others, not themselves. As *Mat. 7. 16, 20. By their fruit ye shall know them*: The place, if you observe it, doth not say by your own fruits you shall evidence your own condition, but it propounds the conversations of men, to be the rule by which we shall judge of men, by which we may conceive their union with Christ, or separation from Christ, yet this cannot yield an infallible evidence to us of their union.

2. All other places that speak of the graces of the spirit, or of obedience to God to be as signs of the souls union with Christ, do only lay them down

as Co-witnessing signs, not as those from whence the soul can first clear his union. Thus far indeed the word manifests, that there are such graces in the hearts of believers, and that believers do see such graces in their hearts; But it is then that believers do see them, when they see their union with Christ. - No believer ever had a true evidence of his union with Christ, but he also saw some such precious holy dispositions begotten in his soul, and some workings of them also towards Christ. So that the Scripture lays them down as Co-witnesses. So *Rom. 8. 16.* *The spirit it self beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the Sons of God:* That is, the light of our renewed understanding, beholding the graces of the spirit of God in our selves, doth draw conclusions that we are united unto Christ, as well as the spirit of God doth evidence and witness it, from the promise of Gods free grace and favour in Christ unto souls. Now thus are those places to be taken in the first Epistle of *John*, where the spirit of God seems to speak most of such signs: He speaks of them there as following signs of a souls union, and so are demonstrations *à posteriori* (as we speak) from the effects, and witness the union as the effect witnesses the cause. But the Scripture no where commands the soul, to seek out the manifestation of his union with Christ by those, and from those, though they are also able to afford some witness unto his union, in way of confirmation of the evidence of it; when once the soul doth behold his union, then beholding his graces, they come in as another window into the soul to let in light; Faith and Sense come in together, and so make the souls consolation full and strong.

III. The

III. The Scripture lays down obedience to God, and love to God, as signs of a souls union with God in Christ, purposely to convince deluders of themselves about their union. It is to convince them of their contrary walking unto souls that are united unto God in Christ : For though no degree of a souls Obedience unto God, nor no degree of love in the heart unto God, be able of it self, and from it self, to clear the union of the soul with God in Christ when it is dark, and to prove that the soul is united; yet some kind of disobedience, and of contrary walking unto God, may manifest that there is no union between God and the Soul. And therefore the Scripture when it hath laid down any such sign, always follows it with the contrary unto any such sign, proving that those Souls that walk directly contrary, cannot be such as are united to God in Christ. Therefore you shall see, no sooner doth the Spirit of God say, *hereby we shall know that we love God, if we keep his Commandments.* 1. John 2. 3. But he saith, *he that saith he loves God and keepeth not his Commandments is a Lyar*; Presently he brings the point back for proof to convince Souls of want of union, by that which is an inseparable effect of the Souls want of union. Yet there are two or three things to be noted about this.

1. The Scripture doth not lay down any defect, of any degree of Obedience, or of Love, or of any degree of perfection of those signs laid down as being consequences of union, as an argument of the Souls want of union. The Scripture doth not say that this degree, or that degree of Love, and this and that manner of Obedience doth follow the souls union with Christ.

2. The

2. The Scripture doth not lay down, that an irregularity, or any disorder in the Souls Obedience unto God, or in the Souls Love unto God and the like, do manifest the Souls want of union. Neither doth he require any perfection in those signs laid down as consequent signs of the souls union, to make the union of the soul evident by them.

3. The Scripture doth not say, that the cessation of those Holy Operations, of those Holy Qualities in the soul, nor the cessation of the acts of love unto God, doth manifest that a soul is not united unto Christ: For there may be a cessation of those acts in the soul for a season, that are the inseparable consequences of the souls union with Christ, but there cannot be a total want, or contrariety in the heart to such things as are the proper effects of union. So that he doth place the evidence of the souls disjunction in a contrariety to these; as when he saith, *by this we know we are passed from Death to Life, because we love the brethren, but he that hateth his Brother abideth in Death*; He that hateth his Brother must needs hate God. So in 1 John 4, 5. When he lays down Obedience to Christ to be the ground of the knowledge of Christ, then presently he saith, *he that saith he knows him, and keepeth not his Commandments is a Lyar.*

There is a third question to be opened, and that is this.

Que. 3. *To what purpose are all the promises made to Qualities inherent in Souls, and to the workings of the Spirit of grace in hearts, seeing Union with Christ cannot be evidenced from them?*

Ans. 1.

Ans. 1. For answer, First there is no promise the Lord makes to any quality inherent in a soul, as a condition upon which the promise should be fulfilled to the soul. That is, there is no promise that the Lord hath made to any quality, so, or in such a manner, as upon the Lords beholding that quality in the Soul, he should repute himself bound to fulfil that promise, or to convey that mercy included in the promise to the Soul : Nor doth the being of the quality lay any such engagement upon God to perform it. Every promise is a part of the Covenant of grace that the Lord holds forth in Christ ; for the Covenant of grace is nothing else but a bundle of promises : All the promises of God in the word bound up in one, is the Covenant of grace, so that it is a thing consisting of so many Articles of agreement between God and the Soul. Now the Covenant of grace should prove no Covenant of grace, if any of those promises were made to a quality, as a condition upon which the Lord were bound to perform the promise.

Ans. 2. Secondly the promises of God to qualities inherent in Souls, are not made to qualities as qualities. That is, not as they are good dispositions, and good inclinations, not as they are works of the Spirit of grace begotten in such Souls. All inherent qualities in souls are to be considered under a two-fold notion, either as they are qualities, that is, as they are affections and dispositions in a soul : Or they are to be considered as they put a soul into such a state or condition, as they make a soul either in a good condition, or a bad condition. Now no soul may look upon any one promise that God hath made to any one quality, and look upon that quality in his heart as that

that good quality, that good disposition to which the Lord hath bound himself by promise, to convey such or such mercies or benefits. As for example, should I name most of the conditional promises in the word, you will find none of the promises made to qualities, are made to them as qualities, but as to a state of Want, and Penury, and Misery, out of which the Lord promisetb Refreshment, Ease, and Relief, out of the Bowels of his own mercy.

1. To begin with thirsting ones. That notable place in *Isa. 55. 1. 2.* *Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters, and he that hath no Money, come ye buy and eat, yea come buy Wine and Milk without Money and without Price.* Come, saith he, take all sutable refreshment for your poor thirsty souls: There is Christ holden forth to thirsty ones, in all the precious priviledges tendred to souls in Christ: Yet this is not made to thirsty ones, as thirsting is a quality, or grace, flowing from the Spirit of grace in their hearts. And that the promise is not made to thirsting Souls, as thirsting after Jesus Christ, or as thirsting is a quality, will appear in three particulars: (1) in that the persons to whom those glorious priviledges are tendred in Christ, are persons void of any quality, or grace, proceeding from the Spirit of grace in their Hearts: They were so far from any Holy quality, as it doth appear from the Text, that they had not any one right desire after receiving any Holiness, For

They are said to be such as are thirsting after false refreshments digging broken Cisterns for their Souls to drink of, they spent their Money for that which was no bread, that is, their desires and endeavours:

deavours: They were the *Jews* that sought for justification by the Law, and Cerimonies.

(2.) They were such as thirsted to supply their wants in a wrong way, and were neglecters of Jesus Christ. They spent their labours and desires after wrong objects, that which was not Bread, things that could not profit: And these were the persons to whom the promise was made, and therefore it could not be made to any quality.

(3.) The same promise is holden forth to every Soul equally, whether thirsting or not thirsting. This you may see *Rev. 22. 17. Let him that is a thirst come* (there is the same promise) *yea let whosoever will come, and take of the Water of Life freely.* Every one under Heaven is joyned under as equal a notion as the thirsty ones: Therefore the promise cannot be made unto thirsty ones, as having such a quality of grace in them, but as poor and penurious Souls, in a sad condition, not knowing how to get their Souls refreshed, and their wants relieved. So again *Mat. 5, 6.* where the promise seems to have more colour to be made to a quality as a quality, *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled.* This promise is not made to Souls as hungering and thirsting after Righteousness, as Holy Dispositions in their Souls, but the promise is made to them only as being needy and penurious, as being in want and extremity; Therefore you shall observe in the promise, *they shall be filled*, what is promised? Nothing to the quality it self, but to the supply of the wants of the poor Soul.

2. If you observe the promises made to humbled Souls, groaning under the burden of Sin, they are not made to any Souls as groaning under the burden

of Sin, or as groaning under the burden of Sin is a quality, or grace in the Soul. As for example, look at that promise. *Mat. 11. 28. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Now saith the Soul I am burdened, and therefore I shall have rest: And here I am perswaded many a Soul sits down in his being burdened, and not in his coming to Christ, and so sits down short of Christ. Now that this promise is not made to Souls burdened as burdened, but as being in a sad condition, ready to sink under grievous pressures, appears in two things.

1. In regard there is nothing promised by God, to the Soul remaining in his present estate. The promise holds forth rest, and ease, to the poor burdened Soul, but how? Not as the Soul remains in his present estate, but through his coming unto Jesus Christ; *Come unto me and ye shall have rest*, that is, receive me as the only refuge of your Souls, and by receiving me by Faith, your Souls shall have rest.

2. In regard there is nothing promised in this promise, to be given to the Soul for the future, more than to other Souls that are not for the present burdened under Sin. Whatever is holden forth in this promise to Souls groaning under their burden, is held forth in other Texts to Souls not groaning under their burdens, in as equal a manner. There can but two things be held forth;

First, An invitation to believe. But there is no more suitability held forth in this promise for an invitation for poor burdened Souls to believe in Christ, than there is in other promises held forth in Scripture to Souls for present not groaning under the burden of Sin. There lies as great an invitation upon every Soul under

under Heaven as the burdened, there lies a command upon every Soul, the invitation runs as equally to the dead in Sin, under the greatest captivity to Satan, as to Souls groaning under the burden of Sin.

Secondly, The second thing that can be held forth in the promise, is Rest and Refreshment. Now you see that the rest is held forth to them, to be received for the future only through believing, and so it is held forth to every Soul under Heaven: Therefore this promise cannot be made to burdened Souls under Sin, as they are so burdened, or as they are qualified with any such quality of grace. You will say then, what is the meaning of the promise? The meaning is this, God discovers to poor necessitous Souls, where they shall have refreshment. The voice of God from Heaven is, Thou poor necessitous Soul, wouldest have refreshment; and thou poor burdened Soul, wouldest have ease? Come to me, cast thy burden upon me by faith, and take my word faith Jesus Christ, thou shalt have rest.

III. If you look into promises made to mourning Souls; As in *Mat. 5. 5. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* So *Isa. 61. 1, 2.* speaking of Christ, *he shall come to comfort those that Mourn in Sion.* But now those promises are not made to Mourners as having the quality of sorrow in their Hearts, as being afflicted for their Sins, and grieving for them; no, not as grieving for the dishonour done to God by their Sins, as if the Lord should have respect to that in the promise. And that will appear in two things.

1. If the promise were to sorrow as a quality in the Soul, then it must needs be as it is a good quality. Now were the promise made to the Soul as a good

good quality, it were the happiness of the soul to have the good quality increase, and continue in his soul : Whereas the promise made to the mourning soul, is to remove the quality by comfort ; comfort and mourning being two contraries. So that if the promise were made to souls having a good quality in them, it were rather a misery to have the promise than a happiness.

2. If the promise were made to sorrow as inherent, then the soul might claim comfort by his mourning, or because of his mourning. And so the original of the souls comfort should be in the quality inherent in the soul.

4. If you go on to poverty of Spirit ; *Blessed are they that are poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* The promise here is not made to a soul poor in spirit, as having that quality in him : For then were the promise of giving the Kingdom of Heaven, to be held forth to no souls but to those that were thus poor and empty ; and so the Kingdom of Heaven should be held forth particularly, as the Lords not being willing to give it to any souls but to such as are thus poor in spirit, that had a true sense of their own nothingness : And so the first promise were to be received by a soul as having true holiness, and grace in his soul, and so consequently the receiving of the promise by Faith, should not be the first act of grace in the soul, but the sight of grace should be necessary in the soul to make him receive a promise.

There is a fourth question to be answered, before we can pass to the affirmative answer.

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Quest. 4.

Quest. 4. Are not the promises made to faith, and believing as believing, that through faith a man can only claim right to the promise? Saith the soul, surely faith is a quality in the soul, and if the promises be made to faith, they are made to qualities as qualities.

Answ. 1. First I answer, That it is apparent that many promises are made to souls actually void of faith. Though I dare not say without respect unto believing for the future, yet I say without any present believing. The most primary, principal, fundamental promises, are made to souls void of faith actually, they are made only to sinners, and that in their very estate of sinfulness, though not properly as they are sinners; that is, not because they are sinners, as if sinners were the qualification of the promise: But heinous sinners, in that doleful condition, the Lord makes the promise to: As in 1 Tim. 1. 15, that precious promise, This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. He looks upon himself only as a sinner, in the application of that promise, that Jesus Christ came to save him. Thus the promises of reconciliation are made to souls ~~from~~ actually without faith, calling them as they are enemies, to close with Jesus Christ as a Mediator between God and them, to make up reconciliation. Thus also that of Luk. 19. 10. That Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost; another precious promise, yet made to souls only lost, without respect to any present being of faith in their hearts.

Answ. 2. Secondly, I answer, that some promises are made for the begetting of faith in souls, and therefore not made to faith as being a quality in the soul, to which those promises should be made. As that

that promise *Ezek, 36. 26. A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you* : The promise is made for the begetting of the habit of faith in the soul, whereby the heart should be changed, whereby the whole work of redemption should be wrought in the soul.

Ans. 3. Thirdly, I answer, That no one promise in the whole Covenant of grace, is made unto faith as a quality pre-existent in a soul. That is, as a quality to be remaining in a soul before he claim right to the promise. So that no promise is made unto a believer because he doth believe : The ground of the promise is not the souls believing; nor the ground of the souls particular interest in the promise is not the souls believing, though the ground of the knowledge of that his interest is his believing. For if faith should be in a soul as a quality, to receive the promise, then these three things would follow.

1. No promise could be fulfilled in, and to a soul, before it actually believe. And then either faith it self must not be a gift from God unto the soul, or else the great fundamental gift should be conveyed unto the soul, not by vertue of the Covenant of grace, nor by vertue of a promise.

2. Then no soul might receive a promise, nor believe a promise, before he saw his own faith. That is, a soul, till he could say, the Lord hath infused the habit of faith into my soul, he might not receive any promise : The reason is plain, whatever the promise should be made unto, that must necessarily be seen in the soul, before the promise can be believed. But now what a preposterous course were this, and what an impossible thing, that I should see my faith before I do believe, that I should see the habit of

faith, before there be an act of faith in my soul? Nay; rather that I should see an act of faith, before ever faith did put forth an act?

3. Then the Covenant of Grace were no absolute Covenant, neither were it a Covenant void of all conditions. For should the Lord make a promise to a quality, as a quality, that quality should be brought in as a condition, to which the Lord should bind himself by his own promise. Then the foundation of any particular souls interest in the Covenant, should not be in the will of God but in the soul it self, through the being of the quality in the soul to whom the Covenant is made: But you read in *Ezek. 36.* and *Jer. 33.* The Covenant is holden forth absolutely, the Lord undertaking every article of the Covenant: The Lord also makes the foundation of the Covenant to be his own will alone, *Rom. 9. 11, to 13.*

Answer. 4. Fourthly, I answer, That the promises that are made unto qualities, do not promise any mercy, or grace, or favour unto souls, in those qualities to which the promise seems to be made. As look over all the promises, *Mat. 11. 28.* *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* The Lord doth not speak peace here to the burdened soul, nor yet comfort, as inviting and exhorting them to take comfort. because they are burdened, or in their being burdened and groaning under sin, but doth direct them unto Jesus Christ for their refreshment; *Come to me and then you shall have rest.* So that promise to thirsty ones, *John 7. 37.* *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink;* The Lord speaks no peace to them in their thirsting, but sends them to Jesus Christ to receive comfort absolutely, as though there were no thirst-
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ing in their souls. So likewise it is of every such promise.

Now from this will follow a direct answer to that question, of what purpose and use these promises are of then? *The use of conditional promises.*

First, they are of a directive use, to lead the soul to Christ. That the soul finding himself poor and penurious, finding himself thirsty, and longing after this refreshment, or that refreshment, after pardon of sin, or sanctification, or receiving more grace, these promises are of use to lead the soul to Jesus Christ, to carry the soul beyond broken cisterns, that he is apt to run to for refreshment, and to open to him the everlasting fountain, where only he can have refreshment. *Of directive use*

2. The promises that seem to be made to such qualities, they are of use by way of Support, to underprop the poor sinking soul. The promise to poor burdened souls, though it doth not presently evidence to the soul, because he is burdened he hath rest, yet it opens a possibility, or probability of rest, and that doth sweetly underprop the poor sinking soul, when he is sinking under his burden. As it was when the poor blind man was come after Jesus Christ, and the Disciples cryed to him to hold his peace, yet when they told him that Jesus Christ called for him, though he had not his sight from thence, yet it could not but be some refreshment to him, there was a ground of hope for his soul to rest upon, whereas he saw no room of hope to stand upon before. *Support.*

*To beget the
qualities.*

3. They are of use for the begetting of those very qualities in the soul, to which the promise seems to be made. By hearing the Lord inviting poor thirsty, empty souls, the eyes of the soul are opened to behold his own emptiness; And by discovering of the precious workings of love in the bosom of God to poor souls, being ready to communicate himself to poor necessitous souls, without any condition required of them, the hearts of poor souls are so allured, and sweetly drawn out after God, that all those holy dispositions and qualities are begotten in them; yea faith it self, to which so many promises are made. Therefore it is observable, *Isa. 52. 20.* That what is there promised to them that turn from transgression, that the holy Ghost, *Rom. 11. 26.* applies unto Jesus Christ, as fulfilling that very quality, to which the promise seems to be made, in souls, even making them to turn from their iniquity and ungodliness; Christ shall perform the condition; As though it were all one to make a promise to a quality in souls, or to make an absolute promise, for the promise begets the condition.

*To reveal
to the soul
its union.*

4. They are of use for the revealing unto a soul his union with Christ, when the Spirit of God opens and discovers those promises unto the soul. For though the Spirit of God reveals not unto a soul the evidence of his union, from any promise made to a quality in this manner, that is, by shewing the soul the quality in himself to which God hath made a promise, and therefore makes the soul to draw this conclusion, that God is bound to communicate such Grace or Mercy to me; yet the Spirit of God may re-

reveal to the soul his union with Christ, in such a promise made unto the qualitie by manifesting the Lords loving kindness, and free grace to a soul in that promise absolutely, as well to beget the quality to which the promise is made, as to fulfill the promise. And thus the Spirit of God may make the promise made to a quality, all one with an absolute promise. Also further, The Spirit of God may also, through revealing the souls union by such a promise, beget that very quality in the heart, and cause the soul to apprehend the quality to be begotten in himself, though it doth not make the soul claim right to the promise by vertue of the quality.

Now that which remains, is the affirmative part of the answer, to answer directly, *How a soul may know his union with the Lord Jesus?* In the giving this affirmative answer, there are divers things also must be premised further.

Premise 1. First I must premise this, That in our ordinary phrase of speech we do make no difference between certainty, and assurance of our union with Christ, but we call every assurance of our union a knowledg of our union, and whatever can make a man infallibly certain he is united unto Christ, that we say in our ordinary phrase can give a soul a knowledg of his union. And indeed the Scripture doth seem to countenance this our phrase of speaking, as in *Job 19.25. I know that my Redeemer liveth,* which could not properly be called knowledg of his union with Christ, but only the knowledg of faith, building upon the certainty of the Lords word.

Pre. 2. We must know that the Scripture doth make a distinction between assurances of souls union with Christ. As in 1 John 4. 16. Saith he, *We know and believe the love of God the father to us*: He makes a twofold assurance, an assurance of knowledg, and an assurance of faith. Now indeed both the assurance of knowledg, and the assurance of faith, may in a large sence be called the assurance of a souls union with Christ, in regard they have both the properties of knowledg. Knowledg is the gathering of a necessary truth, from some unchangable ground: Now in both these assurances, of knowledg and faith, the knowledg of the souls union with Christ ariseth as a necessary truth from an unchangable ground. The word of God is the unchangable ground from which the soul by the assurance of faith, gathers the conclusion to himself, that he is united unto Jesus Christ. And the beholding the peculiar inseperable effects of a souls union with Christ, is that unchangable ground from whence the soul gathers the assurance of knowledg.

Pre. 3. Thirdly, that both the assurance of faith and knowledg are for the most part associates, or companions in the same soul at one time. They are for the most part cotemporary, that is, accompanying one another, that when one is in the soul, the other is in the soul, that when a soul hath assurance of faith, he hath also the assurance of knowledg. And that for a three-fold reason.

1. In regard those graces that are the ground of a souls assurance of knowledge, are witnessed, or declared by the Spirit of God to be given to the soul. Whenever the Lord reveals from his own word unto a soul, his willingness to take his particu-

lar soul into union with the Lord Christ, the Lord doth at the same time witness to the soul, his willingness to confer and bestow upon him all the grace his soul wants, all the holiness the hungry or empty soul is breathing after : He doth at the same time assure the soul he shall have love and delight in God, he shall have poverty of spirit, and strength over corruption.

2. Through the assurance of faith, those graces that are the grounds of the souls assurance of knowledge are begotten immediately. Now in regard these are thus necessarily begotten, thence it is the sight of them cometh to be apparent in the soul, at the same time that the sight of a ground for assurance of faith is apparent in the soul.

3. The lively workings and motions of all kind of graces, are excited and stirred up in every soul, by or through the Lords revealing unto the soul, a ground for assurance of his faith, of his union with Christ. It is then the soul mourns for sin more sweetly, and melts more preciously in the bosom of God than ever before, though it may be there have been some heart-breakings under the sense of his wretchedness formerly. It is then the soul is truly poor in himself, and loaths and abhors himself more than ever before.

Pre. 4. Fourthly, though they be at the same time, for the most part in souls, yet the assurance of faith is the first according to order of nature in the soul. For it is impossible there should be infallible evidences of the souls union with Christ, drawn from his own graces, when there is not some unchangable ground manifested from God unto the soul, for the assurance of faith. So that the assurance of faith in a right orderly way, never flows from

from the assurance of knowledg, but the assurance of knowledg flows from the assurance of faith. And that arises upon these two grounds.

1. In regard it must be the manifestation of the ground of assurance of faith unto the soul by God, that doth procure a ground of the assurance of knowledg in the soul. That appears thus; The grace, or love, or favour of God, is the ground of the assurance of faith: Then the Lord doth draw the the soul to assurance of faith, when he doth reveal to the soul his own particular grace and favour, to take it into union with Christ, out of the meer disposition of his own will alone, for no other respect whatever but for his own sake: Now the grounds of the assurance of knowledg, are the effects of the grace of God revealed, or the fruit of it; Now those are begotten in the soul, not by grace, but by the manifestation of grace in particular unto the soul: It is through grace revealed, that grace hath its right proper effect in a soul; and according to the measure of the grace of God revealed to a soul, it hath the measure and degree of effect. According to that in *1 John 3. 2. We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*: That is, when we behold him, through that sight, we shall be transformed into the Image of God. For the clearing of this, you may consult with divers places, as *John 15. 16. Saith Christ, You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you*: He doth not mean, that they had not chosen Jesus Christ now at present as their portion, but they did not choose Christ first: But the manifestation of Jesus Christ choosing their souls first, is the ground of the souls choosing Jesus Christ. And according to the light revealing to a soul Jesus Christ

Christ's choice of him, so is the degree of strength wherewith the will closeth with Jesus Christ in the choice again. Now the choice of Jesus Christ, is the first act of any habit of grace, that ever any soul brings forth.

There is no gracious act, truly graciously acted by any soul, till the will of the soul be drawn in, upon the sight of the Lords choosing him to union with himself, upon which the will also chooseth Jesus Christ into union with him. And again you may consult with that known place in 1 *John* 4. 19. Saith he, *we love him, because he first loved us*: Not that from the essence of Gods love their love did proceed, (though that be true) but from the manifestation of Gods love: Now as the Apostle tells us, *Gala.* 5, 6. *Faith worketh by Love*: The very first operation of the habit of Faith towards Christ is by love. The soul at the same time it reacheth out a hand of Faith, to grasp hold of Christ, it reacheth out also an hand of Love unto Christ. Now then observe, the Graces, and workings of Graces, being the only ground for a soul to gather assurance of knowledge from; and those Graces not being begotten in a soul, but according to the degree of the Lords manifestation unto souls, a ground of assurance of their union with Christ; Thence it is, that assurance of Faith must needs in order of nature go before the assurance of knowledge.

2. The effects of grace, which are always the grounds of the souls assurance of knowledge, remain dark and hidden, and obscure to the soul, when the grace of God, that is the favour of God to the soul, remains obscure and doubtful. The truth of graces appears most clearly from their Original, from whence

whence they spring, from the root upon which they grow, in regard other Fruits may have so near a resemblance to them, as they cannot be discerned by the eye of the soul, that hath so much darkness in it, whilst it remains here below : But when the original of grace appears, when the soul sees his love flowing meerly from the love of God to his soul, that even because of Gods love to the soul, therefore the soul loves God again, it is then that love appears in the soul to be of the right stamp, and indeed never till then. So that till the love or poverty of spirit, or mourning for Sin, appear to the soul it self to be that which is the proper effect, the proper consequence of the souls union with Christ, the soul cannot be satisfied that his graces are of the right stamp. Now in regard the effects of grace are doubtful, when the grace of God himself to the soul is obscure and hidden ; Thence it is, that the assurance of Faith must go before in order of nature the assurance of knowledge, though for the most part not in order of time.

Now these things considered ; when you ask, how the soul may know his Union with Jesus Christ ? The question must be concerning this assurance of Faith, and not of the assurance of knowledge, for you presuppose your selves not to have any union. Therefore observe what question you ask ; you ask how you may gain an assurance of Faith, that your particular souls are united unto Jesus Christ ? Now this question will divide it self into two questions. First how souls do attain the first, certain, infallible evidence of their union with Christ ? Secondly, How souls that do conceive, and judge, and estimate themselves to have attained their union with Christ,

Christ, may know whether their union be true, whether their evidences be right evidences, or whether they be delusions? The first question must resolve every poor, doubting, scrupulous soul about his Union. But now observe, such souls cannot expect satisfaction from me about the union of their souls, nor from any thing that man, or the Wisdom of man can reveal unto their souls.

And that will appear in these four respects.

1. In regard the producing Faith in the soul is an act of Almighty Power. As you may see *Ephe. 1. 19.* When he prays that they might understand *the hope of their calling*, he prays also that they might understand and know, *the exceeding greatness of his Power to those that believe, according to the working of his Mighty Power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead.* It is called a *work of the Lords Power*, and a *Mighty Power*, that is, a Power of God, as God, as an incomprehensible essence: For it was no other Power than the Power of God as God, *that raised Jesus Christ from the dead*, and the Holy Ghost parallels that Power that draws the soul to believe, with the Power of the God-head.

2. The producing the consequence of Faith of assurance in the soul, is also another mighty work of the Power of God. The consequence is the peace and Harmony in the souls bosom, the settling of the poor tossed soul in his own wished for Heaven: Now the begetting such Peace in the soul is ascribed to the Power of God, *Isa. 57. 18, 19. He creates Peace.* Creation is a work that is proper to God alone as he is God, as he is the infinite Divine essence. Creation is to make something of nothing, and therefore beyond

beyond the Power of all Creatures whatever.

3. It must be a supernatural Divine light, that can reveal to the soul the ground of the assurance of Faith. Therefore you shall see *Ephe. i. 17, 18.* how the Apostle desiring that those *Ephesians* might be brought to understand the depth of the Covenant of grace in their souls, he prays to God that he would send into their Hearts *the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation*, that they might know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints. What is the hope of his calling ;] That is, what are the things hoped for, and propounded as the objects of hope, in the Lords calling souls : You see there is a necessity both of *the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation* ; Not only of a *Spirit of Wisdom*, that is, of an habit of Spiritual Life and understanding infused into the soul, but of a *Spirit of Revelation*, that there might be a light of Revelation from the spirit, to discover those deep hidden things, unto the spirit of understanding that the Lord hath infused into the soul. Now all the Revelations of man unto your souls scrupulous about your union, can reveal no more than an external and outward light, to the outward eye of your understanding : And thence it is, your scrupulous souls can receive no satisfaction about your union, from any thing that can be revealed by man unto your souls. But I pray, mistake not, I do not say, the soul may not receive any satisfaction through that as a means, but rather I affirm, that through those Revelations of truths, unto the eye of the natural understanding, the Lord doth communicate true light into the spiritual understanding : The Lord strikes in with the revelation of truths, and puts light upon truths, and puts light into the soul to receive those truths.

4. In regard the Lord hath appointed a peculiar Officer for that end, and hath designed that work of satisfying souls about their union, for that Officer as peculiar to him alone. Thence you shall see, the Lord hath given the Officer a name suitable for that end, which is *the Comforter*, *John* 14. 26, and commonly he is called as well by that name alone, as the Spirit of God: Now the office of the spirit is to *lead into all truth*, *John* 16. 13, and it must be truth, that is some revelation of the mind of God, that must give such souls satisfaction about their union. Now in regard of all this, it is evident, that souls scrupulous about their union cannot expect satisfaction, from any thing revealed by any man to their Souls, but only so far as the resolution of this question will give them satisfaction, and that's in two things. First, in revealing to their Souls the insufficiency of their commonly supposed grounds from whence they seek for evidence of their union. Secondly in raising their eyes of expectation, to the right original of evidences of union. We shall now proceed to the answer of this great question, How souls attain the evidence of their union with Christ? And yet before this question can be answered, it will divide it self into three Branches. First, from whence, or from what ground, souls do attain the infallible evidences of their union with Christ? Secondly, by what means do souls attain the evidences of their union? Thirdly, in what manner those means produce the evidence of the souls union with Christ?

Quest. 1.

Quest. 1. *The first question is, from whence Souls attain infallible Evidences of their Union with Christ?*

Ans. I answer, That there is but one only peculiar ground substantially, from whence souls can expect to receive infallible evidences of their union; and that's the Lords own free promise, past out of the riches of his own grace alone, to poor despisable souls, wherein the Lord reveals his willingness to confer or bestow the Lord Christ upon their souls. Now that this free promise alone, is the infallible ground, from whence souls can receive the infallible evidence of their union, will appear in these three particulars.

I. In regard a Divine word must be the proper adequate object of a Divine Faith: And every particular act of Divine Faith, must have a Divine word. Thence it is that in *Rom. 10. 17.* The whole Gospel, considered as the Gospel, is said to be the word from which Faith cometh, that is, the word which is the foundation of Faith: Not that it is the bare hearing of it that produceth Faith, but through the hearing of the word, the Lord reveals that word unto souls to be a true infallible foundation for souls to build upon. And thence it is that the Word of God, past out from God as a promise unto souls, is made a ground of true hope unto souls: Saith *David. Psal. 119. 49. Remember thy word, [that is thy promise] unto thy Servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.* Now the word of promise thus considered, being the only proper object of Divine Faith; thence it is, that it can only be from a divine promise, that a soul can receive the infallible evidence of his union with Christ.

II. In regard there must be a revelation from God, of his free donation, and giving Christ unto a soul; that must be the ground of the act of every assuring faith. It must be through some light and apprehensions the soul hath of the Lords free will concerning his soul, that Christ and his soul shall be one, that any act of assuring faith can go out of the soul. And that may appear in two things.

1. In regard faith respects things only as they are revealed by Speech from some person or other, and respects the authority of the person speaking, as the ground and foundation upon which it acts, that is, upon which faith does believe. Thus the authority of the Lords speaking was the ground of *Sarabs* faith, *Heb. 11. 11.* So the ground of *Paul's* faith is expressed thus, *I know whom I have believed, and that he is able.* Now the Lord reveals his mind concerning the eternal condition of such souls, only in his promise: Thence it follows necessarily, there must be some revelation of the mind of God, in the word of promise, or the Lords donation or giving Christ to the soul, before there can follow any act of assuring faith.

2. It appears, in regard faiths proper exercise consists only in receiving. Whence you may observe in Scripture, that believing and receiving are both put for one ordinarily, *John 1. 12.* and *Chap. 3. 33.* So that of necessity for every right exercise of any act of faith, there must be an apprehension of something given, that may be received by a soul. And thence it is of indispensable necessity, that there be an apprehension of the Lords giving Christ to the soul to be one with it, before there can be an act of assuring faith in the soul.

III. It must be from the promise from whence the soul receives the evidence of his union, in regard there must be a particular infallible certainty to faiths eye, in the ground from whence faith of assurance, or faith of evidence doth act. Faith working only as a receiver, can receive no fuller certainty, or have any fuller confidence in it self, of any thing to be effected or done, than it sees manifest from the grounds, from whence it takes that confidence or assurance: Now the promises alone are the infallible certainty to the eye of faith; Yea, the Lord according to his own unchangable counsel, hath determined that there should be no other certainty, but to the eye of faith, *Rom. 4. 16. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed.* And that's the answer to the first Question, from whence souls do receive the infallible evidence of their union with Christ, which you see is only from the divine promise. But yet here is another Question souls will cast in, before we answer the second, By what means?

Quest. But may the soul say, Is it not from the sight of a condition to which the Lord hath made some promise of Christ, that a soul doth receive the infallible evidence of his union? It is true it must be from a promise, but the promise is not the nearest ground, the proximate ground, but the remote ground, the furthest off ground; And the condition of the promise fulfilled in the heart is the nearest ground, and the immediate ground from whence the soul receives the evidence of its union.

For answer to it, there are divers things to be premised, and then to come to the direct answer of the question.

Prem. 1

Prem. 1. First, I must premise, That it is a general received division of the promises, that they are either absolute, or conditional. Absolute, made and founded upon the will of God alone, and so to be accomplished only according to his own will, and because he will. Or else promises are made to some particular condition to be performed in souls, upon which the Lord doth also fulfill the promise to the soul. Now this division divides the promises into a Covenant of grace, and a Covenant of works; so it is all one with that known division promises legal, and promises evangelical, promises according to the Law, and promises according to the Gospel.

Prem. 2. Secondly, I shall premise, That there can be no promises of the Covenant of Grace properly called conditional promises, there being not one condition included in the whole Covenant of Grace to which any one promise is made. So that the division of the promises, into promises absolute, and promises conditional, cannot hold rightly in the Covenant of Grace, but ~~every~~ promises considered in the Covenant of Grace, are all absolute promises: That is, the revelation of Gods will to souls, that the Lord hath simply and fully determined to accomplish, according to the manner, and order, and latitude wherein he doth propound them unto souls; and that without any impediment or interruption, so that whatever can possibly intervene, yet the Lords will shall prevail in performing the promise. Thence you shall observe *Jer. 31. 32.* that the new Covenant, called *the Covenant of Grace and Love*, is distinguished from the old Covenant God made with the Jews as a Nation, in that it was a Covenant wholly absolute, containing nothing but promises which the Lord in-

tended to fulfill, whatever can intervene : *Therefore I will not make such a Covenant as I made with your fathers, which my Covenant they brake, (observe that) but I will make such a Covenant as they shall not be able to break.* For, saith God, *I will write my law in their hearts, and put my fear in them;* As if he should say, I will do all things for them : So that there is not one promise that can properly be called a conditional promise : Indeed improperly I grant, the promises of the Covenant of Grace may be divided into conditional and absolute promises. Some promises of the Covenant of Grace, may be called conditional in this respect, that there are some limits and bounds set to the promises ; as these two great bounds, *his own glory, and his peoples good.* And only in three sorts of promises those limitations hold. As,

1. In all temporal promises, of temporal blessings and favours to his own. The Lord hath not absolutely promised riches, and honour, and prosperity to all the Subjects of the Covenant of Grace, though godliness hath the promise of this life, and that which is to come ; And though he hath tyed his own sufficiency to supply them, yet not so as it admits of no limitation ; but these two come in, *the Lords glory, and his peoples own good.* And likewise in dispensing all blessings privatively, that is, the freeing the soul from all temporal evils, from afflictions, distress, and burdens, this freedom is promised in the Covenant of Grace, yet it admits of this limitation, so far as it may concern the Lords glory : So that so far as the glory of God is advanced, in his peoples groaning under burdens and sufferings for a time, the Covenant is nevertheless fulfilled.

2. The promise of Gods giving the common gifts
of

of the spirit, God is not bound to them in the Covenant, without limitation. Therefore in 1 Cor. 12. Those common gifts of the spirit God dispenseth them variously; one he fills with them, and leaves another poor and weak, void almost of any of those gifts of the spirit, that the glory of God may be advanced in that dispensation; and certainly every soul is not futable to manage such a treasury of common gifts, therefore the other limitation comes in also, the souls own good.

3. Those conditions or limitations hold only in the promises concerning the measure, and manner, and order of Gods dispensing himself to souls in privative, or positive things. All spiritual mercies, privative as well as positive, that is, the preservation of the soul from all temptations, and buffettings of Satan, the preservation of the soul from all desertions, this is also included in the Covenant of Grace; But it is in this sence but a conditional promise, a limited promise, so far as may be for the Lords own honour, the soul shall be free from temptations: Yet now, though in this sence, under all these three heads there be ^{conditional} ~~continual~~ promises, yet that which is absolutely necessary, for the soul cannot be said to come under any of these limitations; Life and Salvation, and everlasting Communion with the glorious Trinity, and with the glorious Saints and Angels, are so absolutely promised, as they come not under these limitations, but that which is absolutely necessary for the soul, the Lord hath bound himself absolutely to convey to the soul. Yet these limited promises cannot properly be called conditional, but are absolute in themselves, as will appear in three particulars.

1. These limited promises, thus bounded, are not left in the limitations of them unto the persons to whom they are made. So that they are improperly called conditional promises, in regard conditional promises do imply some condition to be performed by the parties to whom the promises are made: Now these limitations of such promises, are not in the power of persons to whom they are made, that they should judge and determine, when for their own good, and for the Lords glory they should have such and such promises made good to them, but they depend upon the sole wisdom of God.

2. These promises bounded with these extents, are simply and absolutely determined by God to be fulfilled, according as they are propounded. Now then is a promise absolute, when without respect to any thing whatever that can possibly intervene, or be interposed, it is undertaken to be fulfilled to the person to whom it is made, according to the full extent wherein it is propounded. Now in the full extent of the propounding of those promises, wherein God may have glory, and the soul advantage, the Lord hath as absolutely engaged to give all common gifts of the spirit, all outward blessings, (whatever possibly can intervene) as he hath also any part of the Covenant of Grace.

3. These promises pertaining to the Covenant of grace, bounded with limitations, are by the infinite wisdom of God, bounded with such limitations only, as make them to be absolute love and Grace from God to the soul. For indeed those limitations are no other than preventions of what might make such promises to have evil interwoven with them as well as good, and then should they not be absolutely love:

love : For observe all Gods promises of temporal mercy to the soul, therein come to be love to the soul, because God hath bounded ^{them} with that limitation, so far as shall be for the souls own good and advantage. So that from these considerations, even those limited promises prove as absolute, as all the other promises of the Covenant of Grace : So that you see there are no promises belonging to the Covenant of Grace, but what are meerly Grace ; No condition may come in to challenge any thing in the Covenant of Grace.

Prem. 3. Thirdly, I must premise, That all those promises that seem to be made to conditions in souls, they are included under one of these five heads.

1. They are made to persons having such conditions in them as put them into a case of want and poverty, and so the Lord propounds refreshment to them, suitable to their wants and poverty. Of this nature are the promises made to thirsty and burdened souls.

2. Those may be no promises, but revelations of the glorious privileges that God doth freely bestow upon his own people. As to instance in those promises that seem to be made to love to God and Christ, *John 14. 21. He that loveth me shall be loved of my father, and I will love him, and will manifest my self to him :* Here seems to be a promise made to love, whereas it is only a revelation of the precious privilege that belongs to the people of God, and a discovery of the precious purpose of God concerning his own, out of the meer disposition of his goodness towards them. If any promise should be made to that precious grace of love, methinks this should, it runs ev ery way in the nature of a promise : But yet

hence it appears it is no promise, made to loving Christ, as a condition upon which the promise should be fulfilled, in regard that disposition, or precious habit of love to Jesus Christ in the soul, is an effect of the Covenant of Grace it self: Now that the Covenant should be made to that which is the proper effect of the Covenant of Grace it self, no man can conceive. And that demonstration is sufficient to clear all other promises of this nature. So if you examine the promise made to fear, *Psal. 34. 7, 8. The Angels of the Lord pitch their tents about them that fear him*: It is taken for a promise, but it is only the priviledge of the Saints. So likewise look to all the promises of obedience, *Deut. 5. 10. The Lord reserves mercy for a thousand generations, of them that love him and keep his commandments*. There is a large promise that seems to be made to obedience: But no soul understanding the absolute degree of God from eternity, can conceive the obedience of any soul should be the motive that should move God to shew mercy to the soul or body; or that God should bind himself to his own people, yielding obedience to him, to become a debtor to their posterity in respect of their obedience; for then the mercies their posterity should enjoy, should owe their immediate being, and the glory of their being to their immediate ancestors, and not to God as the immediate cause of the being of their mercies: Therefore these are only declarations of the priviledges of the people of God, and all these promises are only manifestations of his goodness to them, for the manifestation of the riches of his Grace, for refreshing their spirits, and for the causing them to be precious in the esteem of others.

3. If those promises that seem to be made to qualities in the soul as unto conditions, be not thus, then they are only descriptions of the persons of those that God doth interest in the glorious privileges of Christ, by the special peculiar Graces that God communicates to them.

Or else 2. They are discoveries of the means through which God doth convey those privileges of Christ and of the Covenant of Grace unto persons. Of this nature is that promise which seems to be made to a condition, *Isa. 57. 17. Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.* This that seems to be a promise made to a soul, indued by the Spirit of God with the Grace of Humility, it is but either a description of those persons whom the Lord doth interest in his own special favour, out of the riches of his own Grace alone; Or else it is a precious Cordial givento a poor drooping Spirit, as considered in an estate of penury and poverty, as one contrite and ready to give up himself. Of this nature are all those promises made to believing, and repenting: *He that believeth and repenteth shall be saved:* The promise of salvation is not made unto faith, as a special grace of God in the soul, nor to the person indued with that grace: But the thing it self properly is no promise, but rather a description of the means through which the Lord makes his people partakers of the special privilege he conveys through Christ, and of the persons he communicates them to by their qualities.

5. Those

5. Those words of God that seem to be promises made unto conditions (if none of the four former things contain them, then) they are descriptions given by the Holy Ghost, of the way the Lord requires, and enables his people to walk in, while he communicates of his own free mercy to them. Of this nature is that place, so mistaken, *Ezek 36. 27, 28, 29, 30,* (which is the greatest place conceived to be of weight to prove promises to be made to conditions) saith the Lord, *I will do these and these things for you, I will bring you into your Land, and make you dwell quietly and safely in your Land, and I will save you from your Uncleaness, &c.* But *v. 37.* Thus saith the Lord God, *I will yet for this be enquired of by the House of Israel to do it for them.* Generally the soul conceives, here is the promise, and the condition of the promise: The promise to be the multitude of Mercies; And the condition to be the seeking of the face of God. But the meaning of the Holy Ghost is nothing else but to describe the way the Lord requires his people to walk in, whilst they are in expectation to receive those precious mercies, freely promised by God for them. Likewise that in *1 Kings 8. 47. 48.* Solomon prays for his people, *If they bethink themselves in the Land, whither they were carried Captives, and repent and make Supplication, &c.* Now saith the Soul, here is both the promise and the condition of the promise: The condition is seeking Gods face, humbling themselves for their Sins, turning to God with all their hearts: And then there is the promise that God will deliver them; but they must observe these conditions, else God binds not himself to give deliverance. Now the true meaning of the Holy Ghost is only this: *Solomon* in pray-
ing

ing here at the dedication of his Temple (the Typical House of God) beseecheth the Lord that the prayers of all his people made towards that Temple, (that is, towards Jesus Christ typified by that Temple) and according to the will of God, that they might be all acceptable to God: Therefore observe, *Solomon* in praying doth only describe the frame of Spirit in Gods people when they come to pray, which is an humble frame, a turning frame from their Sins. Neither doth God make the promises in either of both those places, to depend upon any of these duties named, not so much as prayer it self:

Therefore for the clearing these Texts, I pray consider these things, which may be useful for us for the right understanding the Covenant of grace, and the nature of it.

I. That the duties here required by God from his people, are the way wherein it is his will his people should walk in receiving mercies. They are not precedent in order of time before the Lords intituling the soul to the whole Covenant of grace, and every promise contained in it; nor so much as in order of nature: That is, that it must be presupposed that the soul have performed such and such duties, before it can be presupposed the Lord to have interested the soul in every promise of the Covenant of grace. And that will appear in these two things.

First, that the act of the Lords will alone, before and without any act of the will of man concurring, doth fully intitle the soul to every promise of the Covenant of grace: Otherwise it should be conceived, that there should be some good will in man towards God, before there be any good will in God towards man; And so some act of good will from man to God,

God, should not flow from the acts of Gods good will to the soul.

Secondly, in regard the performing of that duty by a soul, that the Lord requires of it in communicating grace, mercies, and favours to it, is the Lords fulfilling his own Covenant of grace, in, and to the soul. *Jer.* 31. 33. *Ezek.* 36. 27. Now that which is a part of Gods fulfilling the Covenant, cannot go before the Covenant it self. So that from thence are two things that you must conclude.

First, that the performing those duties that God requires, do give no soul any title or interest in any one promise of the Covenant of grace.

Secondly, that the Lords promise to the Soul, hath no dependance upon the souls performance of the duty, that God requires him to perform, in reference to Gods communicating mercy to the soul. Yet I pray here be cautelous: I do not say that God requires no duty from souls, whilst he is thus communicating his free grace and mercy unto them; I do not exempt souls from duty, but I only exempt Gods promise from a dependance upon the duty, and establish Gods own promise upon its right Basis and Foundations, which is only his own will and absolute determination.

II. The second thing you are to observe for the clearing of these Scriptures is this; That those duties required by God from souls in communicating mercies, must of necessity go before the Lords intitling the soul to many mercies. Though they cannot in order of nature, go before any promise of the Covenant of grace, yet in order of nature at least, if not in order of time, they go before the Lords intitling the soul to very many mercies, mercies almost

most of all sorts : That is, till souls have performed those duties God requires, they can claim no right nor title, nor have any right nor title unto many mercies : And all the right their souls enjoy to many mercies, may, and must be conveyed to them through the performance of these duties. As for example, in 1. *Kings* 8. 47, 48. God promiseth deliverance to them out of captivity, and restauration of them into their own land, and many priviledges ; yet those duties there described by the Holy Ghost to be the way of his peoples approach to him, and seeking his face for their return out of captivity, could not but of necessity go before, at least in order of nature, to the Lords intituling that people in the mercy of deliverance ; so that while those duties were not performed by the soul, there could be no right, nor title claimed ^{of} that deliverance by those persons.

But now there are four or five things to be observed for the clearing of this.

1. That the duties here required by God, though they do, and must go before the Lords intituling the soul to many mercies, yet they do not, nor cannot go before the Lords intituling the soul to any absolute mercies. Those absolute mercies are conveyed to the soul through the Covenant of grace absolutely, without any respect or reference to any duty whatever performed by the soul, so as the promise of them should have dependence upon the duty in the least degree : But these relative mercies are only included in the Covenant of grace with limitation, so as they are mercies considered with such circumstances, considered as being communicated to such persons, in such order, in such manner, in such degree. Now it is of these mercies only, that these duties required by God,

God, may go before in order of nature, to the Lords intitling the soul to the mercy.

2. Observe, Though these duties may go before, and ordinarily must go before, the Lords intitling the soul to such mercies, yet it is not the duty that gives the soul the right to those mercies thus to be enjoyed. Suppose those relative mercies to be conveyed to any particular soul, at a futable time, in a futable manner, order, measure and degree, every way futable so as they are mercies, and then all these mercies are as absolutely promised in the Covenant of grace, as those absolute eternal mercies, that cannot but be mercies, however they are communicated.

3. It is not the duty, nor the performance of it, that gives the soul the right and title to the promise. So that the duty is neither the immediate ground of the souls right to the mercy, nor the remote ground, that is, the furthest off ground. The furthest off ground is the promise; The immediate is that which gives them right to the promise: Now the soul must be in the Covenant of grace before the duty be performed, and being in the Covenant of grace, he hath right to the promise through which he partakes of such relative mercies.

4. Though there be an ordinary necessity of these duties required by God, preceeding, or going before the souls enjoying such mercies; yet it is not the duty simply considered in its own nature as a duty, upon which this necessity lies, that it should go before the souls enjoyment of the mercies. I mean thus, it is not prayer, that God requires of thy soul, that waits for the communication of any mercy or grace, considered only as prayer, (which is to be considered as a duty) that this of necessity must go before the

the souls injoyment of the mercy ; that is, as though the Lord would have this necessity to be upon the performing of the duty, because he would have something done by the soul, before he will make it partake of his mercies : Only the performance of the duty so disposeth the heart, as a mercy shall be a mercy to the Soul.

5. Observe further, That the rise and exercise of the duties thus required by God, sometimes to go before the Lords vouchsafing such mercies to souls, can be only from the vertue of some promise contained in the Covenant of grace, which the Lord fulfills in a soul. For without influences from the Covenant of grace, were there the most exquisite prayers, the most continual strong wrastlings of a soul with God, the most powerful Mourning and Weepings, and Cryings after God, all could not dispose a soul rightly for the injoyment of any of those relative mercies, so as they should be mercies unto them, when they are communicated.

3. There is a third thing also to be observed for the clearing of these Scriptures, and that is, That these duties that are sometimes precedent in souls before their enjoyment of such relative mercies, are absolutely promised to those that are in the Covenant of Grace, to be effected by God in their souls. This you may see apparent. *Ezek. 36* comparing *v. 27.* with *v. 37.* In *v. 37.* he saith, *I will be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them,* but *v. 27.* he saith, *I will put my Spirit in you and cause you to walk in my Statutes and my Judgments to do them.* And *Jer. 31. 33.* saith the Lord, *I will write my Law in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me :* The Lord doth even engage himself absolutely

absolutely to work that in their hearts; that he doth require to be done by their souls in his communicating mercies to them. Now these things being thus cleared, the question that the soul propounds cannot stand. The question was, whether it was not from the sight of the condition, to which the promise was made and fulfilled in the soul, that the soul did conclude his right to the promise, and so had his evidence of union with Christ? There being no condition in the whole Covenant of Grace, to which God hath made any promise, it cannot be that it should be from the sight of any such condition, that a soul should have his evidence of his union with Christ. But then the question will be resolved into this question.

Quest. But saith the soul, *Doth not the Lord first reveal those graces that he describes his own people by, to be in souls, and then through the sight of them clear to souls that he hath given them the Lord Christ out of his own good will alone through the promise; And so it must be through the sight of such graces as God describes to be in his people, that a soul must see himself to be one of Gods people?*

Answ. 1. Now to this, I answer, First, That the Lord doth reserve to himself his own liberty, concerning his own particular word, from whence he doth reveal to souls infallibly their union with Christ. The Lord doth not bind himself from a revealing unto souls their union with Christ, by some word describing the Graces of the people united unto Christ, nor from some word only inviting souls unto Christ.

Answ. 2. Secondly, I answer, That the Lord doth not evidence unto souls their union with Christ, without

without the sight of those graces, in some measure or degree that the holy Ghost describes the Lords own people by. When the Lord reveals his own free gift of Christ to the soul, he doth reveal to the soul his willing accepting of Christ so given: And that's all one as if I should say, the soul sees his own faith, and so consequently doth see such graces to be in his soul.

Ans. 3. Thirdly, I answer, That the Lord doth never reveal any Graces of the Spirit to any Soul, as the ground or cause of evidencing unto the soul his union with Christ. There are two things intended in this.

First, That the Lord never reveals those graces in souls, to be that which gives the soul right to the promise of the gift of Christ. The Lord never manifests unto any soul, that because there are such and such holy dispositions, or precious heavenly qualities, that he hath communicated to him, that therefore he is inclined towards him, and is willing to confer the Lord Jesus upon him, or to accept him into union through Christ: But the Lord reveals himself willing to accept souls into union with himself in Christ, as they are considered under the notion of poor, despicable, worthless Souls, without the least good disposition or holy inclination that can possibly be imagined in their hearts.

Secondly, The Lord never reveals those Graces in the Soul to be the foundation of the Souls assurance. That is, the Lord doth not manifest to the Soul, that because there are such Graces, or such precious habits in his Soul, therefore upon the sight of those, the Soul ought to believe the Lords free tender, and free gift of the Lord Christ to it. The

Lord doth not make those Graces to be the foundation of the Souls faith, So that the Souls hope and comfort should rest upon the sight of those Graces, that God should discover to be communicated to the Soul. And that will appear in two things.

First, If the Lord should cause the Soul, by discovering Graces to be in him, to bottom its hope upon the sight of those Graces, then should the Graces of the Spirit in the Soul be the object of Faith, and so Faith should not be the evidence of things not seen, but rather the evidence of things seen. Now the Scripture never propounds any holy quality in the Soul to be the object of Faith, considering the quality as being inherent in the Soul: It is out of all question, the Scripture propounds believing, without the sight of any of those qualities, as that which every soul ought to seek after with his greatest strength, *John 20. 29.*

Secondly, Should the Lord manifest Graces to be in Souls first, so as to bottom the hopes of their union with Christ upon the sight of those Graces, then the Lord should not settle the faith of such Souls upon an immutable, unchangable ground. The Spirit it self in all its workings, both in regard of the person in whom it works, in regard of the manner, and time of such workings, is well compared by Christ to the wind, that bloweth where and when it listeth: And so all the graces of the Spirit, and the workings of those Graces, may be said to be changable things: and should the Lord ground the Faith of a Soul upon a changable ground he should walk contrary to his revealed will, *Heb. 6. 18.* he hath given two immutable grounds, his word and oath — the Lords will is, there should be everlasting, constant,

stant, unchangable grounds upon which every act of Faith should be built in relation to the Lord Christ, that there may be unmoveable and unchangable consolation.

Ans^w. 4. Fourthly, I answer, That the Lord may, and doth to some Souls, reveal Graces to be in them; before he doth evidence unto their Faith their Union with Christ. The Lord may manifest that there is some poverty of Spirit, some broken heartedness for Sin, some precious change, before he doth assure unto their Faith their Union with Christ. But then there are two things to be noted for the clearing of this conclusion.

First, That the Lord doth not reveal the truth of such Graces, to be in such a Soul unquestionably, so as to enable the Soul to conclude from thence, the acceptance of his Soul into Union with Christ. The dreadful storm of fear and terrour, that may be risen upon the soul, may be much alayed, but alas there will be many a wave go over the Soul still.

Secondly, That the evidence of the truth of those Graces in the Soul, holds equal proportion with that evidence the Lord gives to Faith of the Souls Union with Christ, or of the Lords free gift of Christ to him. The evidence of the truth of those Graces, and the evidence unto Faith runs parallel together; They are dark and clear together, holding one equal proportion. And therefore untill God assure the Faith of the Soul, that he is willing to accept him into union with Christ, the Soul hath not an unquestionable assurance of the truth of those Graces that are in his Soul.

Ans^w. 5. It is not the discovery of Grace in a poor doubting Soul, but the discovery of the Lords

absolute uncontrollable will, to receive a Soul into union with the Lord Christ, that is the ground from whence the Souls Faith is assured of his Union with Christ, ~~that is the ground from whence the Soul is assured of his Union with him.~~ Now this I shall desire to clear from divers particulars.

1. In regard the immediate ground of the certainty of the promise, or of the Covenant of Grace unto the Soul, can be nothing else but the gift of God. Therefore saith the Apostle, *Röm. 4. 16. It is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed.* And that the immediate ground of the certainty of the promise, must be gift alone, appears in two things.

First, In regard the foundation of all must be Grace. *Eph. 1. 6, 7. That we might be to the glory of his Grace.* Therefore in *Ezek. 16. 62, 63. I will establish my Covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord;* There's the absolute promise: What is the end? *That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.* This is strange one would think, that they should be ashamed and confounded when God is pacified, and reveals himself to be pacified; But here is the mystery of it, The Lord lays Grace as the foundation of all his ways towards them, purposely that the glory of all that God communicates to Souls might be to himself alone.

Secondly, In regard there can be nothing else the object of faith. There are but two things that can be grounds of certainty, It must be either Grace in God, or Grace in the Soul: Either the love of God,

or the effects of the love of God in the Soul. Now the effects of the love of God in the Soul are things seen, ^{and} therefore not the objects of Faith, *Heb.*

11. 1.

2. The discovery of the absolute will of God must be the only ground of assurance, in regard faith can discern no certainty of Gods differencing one soul from another, but what the Word of God reveals. Now the Word of God reveals no other ground of the Lords differencing one soul from another, but only his own will, *Rom.* 9. 12. 18.

3. In regard the sight of the certainty of the souls right, of receiving Christ into union with himself, doth wholly depend upon a sight of the certainty of the Lords will to receive the soul into union with Christ. Though the Spirit of God hath secretly allured the heart, from those dark Visions of Christ, to embrace him truly, so as there is a real union between Christ and the soul, yet the soul cannot judge aright of his receiving the Lord Christ so tendered, to be given to his soul, till he sees that he did receive the Lord Christ upon the right ground.

4. In that it is the souls duty to receive the gifts of God, in that order wherein the Lord manifests his giving of his gifts. Now the order wherein the Lord propounds his gifts, is first the gift of the Lord Christ, and then the gift of all graces, as the adjunct of the gift of the Lord Christ. And thence the Lord invites the soul, and commands the soul first in order to receive Christ, that so it might partake of all the graces of Christ, and all those dispositions of Holiness the soul longs for.

5. In that the Lord judgeth it sufficient for assuring the Wavering Trembling soul of a poor sinner,

fearing the indignation of God against him for his sin. You shall read *Gen. 3. 15.* That all the promise that God gave to *Adam* (when out of question the poor man was in great distress) was only this, *That the Seed of the Woman should break the Serpents Head.* A meer discovery of his absolute free will, without respect to any thing in souls themselves, that he would deliver solely by a way devised by his own Wisdom, by a Mediatour, by taking upon him the humane nature, and conquering the powers of Hell, that did then hold poor souls captive. Could *Adam* have received no evidence, nor no assurance of the Lords accepting his soul into union with himself again in Christ from that promise, the soul of *Adam* had been left altogether comfortless, there being no description given by God, of any graces that his own spirit did communicate, to the souls of such that he had accepted into union with himself.

6. In regard the patterns holden forth in Scripture, of such as have received their union with Christ, received the evidence of their union from the Lords absolute promise, from the discovery of his will alone to do good unto their souls. In *Gen. 15. 6, 7, 8,* compared with *Rom. 4. 18, 19.* you shall see *Abraham* the Father of all believers, he received the evidence of the Lords blessing him in Christ, (which is all one with taking into union with Christ) only by the discovery of the Lords absolute will towards him. Another pattern you see *Isa. 6. 5, 6, 7;* [†]In the sense of his own wretchedness, crying out, *Wo is me, I am undone, &c.* A Seraphim flew unto him having a live coal in his hand, which he took off the Altar, and laid it upon his mouth; [you must conceive it was done in a Vision] and said, *See this hath touched thy lips,*

† you finde the Prophet *Isaiah*

lips, and thine Iniquity is taken away, and thy Sin purged. Here is an absolute promise of the Lords free love to *Isaiab*; It gives him no Characters at all; but tells him his Iniquity is taken away, and this satisfied the soul of *Isaiab* as you may see v. 8. by his readiness to obey the command of God, *here I am, send me*: And the case is every way parallel; only this particularizeth the person of *Isaiab*, whereas other promises are holden forth generally, but yet every particular soul is as fully included, and the promise is as absolutely spoken to every soul receiving it, as it was unto *Isaiab*; And it is the light of the Spirit that shines forth in the promise, that doth put as much particularity, and doth as much particularize the promise to any one soul, as this promise was particularized to *Isaiab* in a Vision. So that it is from the Lords absolute will alone, that the soul receives a full ground of his union with Christ. Thats the first branch of the 5th Conclusion.

The second branch of the fifth Conclusion was, That it was not the discovery of the graces of the scrupulous soul, doubtful of his union, that did thus evidence unto the soul his union. Now the discovery of graces in the soul still dark in his union, cannot be in order the first ground from whence the soul doth receive the evidence of his union. Though at the very same instant the soul may by the discovering of those graces, see his union, and conclude his union from the sight of those graces, yet in order of nature this is not the immediate ground that gives the certainty to the soul. And that will appear,

I. In regard the gift of the Lord Christ, cannot be first received of a soul by Faith as a soul is gratuitous, or by the soul being considered under the notion

of a soul that hath any Graces, or Holy Habits, or Qualities inherent in him. But the first sight of the gift of the Lord Christ to the soul formerly dark about his union, must have respect and relation to the necessities of the soul, to whom the gift is manifested, else the gift cannot be closed with, as suitable; Thence it must be manifested as a gift of a Mediatour, to a poor despicable, and desperate Rebellious Wretch, against the highest Majesty of Heaven, to mediate with the great Commander of Heaven, for pardon to such a poor despicable Rebel. It must be received as a gift of a days man, that may lay his hand upon both parties, upon God and the Soul as at difference, to make up an union. Whence it is that the Apostle in opening the work of receiving the Lord Christ by Faith, considers the soul under the notion of an Ungodly one in the receiving of it. *Rom. 4, 5.*

II. It cannot be that the discovery of graces should be first in order to such a soul, in regard, the first manifestation of the gift of God to the soul, that hath hitherto set in darkness, must be a manifestation unto his Faith of the gift of those very graces: And the graces themselves considered as given, are no proper objects of Faith, and therefore can give no assurance unto Faith: But it is only the promise wherein the Lord holds forth his free will, both to *give* Christ and those Graces, that must be the only ground from whence the soul can receive the evidence unto his Faith of his union with Christ. Thus you have the first question opened, the ground from whence souls receive the evidence of their union.

The second thing to be opened is the means by which. What means the Lord useth to make the promise

promise efficacious for this end, to give the soul assurance of his union with Christ. But before we come to answer this question, there is another question to be opened, that arises from the former.

Quest. But saith the Soul, can the Lords absolute promise, be the ground from whence the Soul can have the first infallible evidence of his union, seeing there is no absolute promise of God, wherein he discovers his own will to accept any one particular soul into union with the Lord Christ? All the absolute promises, saith the Soul, are made to the Church and people of God; But the Lord in these absolute promises doth not reveal the particular Souls that are his own: Therefore, How can I, or any other know, that I am the particular soul in the promise, there being no particularizing of any soul?

Ans. For Answer to this Question, I shall first open what is generally granted by every soul, by way of premise, for the right understanding of things. And then lay down two Conclusions for the full answer of the question.

Pre. 1. First it is generally granted by all, that it is by vertue of the Lords absolute promise of accepting souls into union with Christ, that souls are united unto Christ. The absolute promise alone is like Jacobs Ladder, it is the Heavenly Ladder upon which the Lord Christ alone comes down into any soul. It is the absolute promise that is the precious Golden Chain, that binds the Lord Christ to the soul, and the soul to Christ: That the precious Marriage knot of union is only knit by that Chain of the absolute promise. This will appear in three things.

1. If

1. If it were not by vertue of the absolute promise that the soul were united to Jesus Christ, then the absolute good will ^{of God} unto souls were not the primary, or first ground of union between Jesus Christ and souls. For the promises are nothing else but the Revelations, or Discoveries, of the Lords good will concerning souls: Now thence it is, if it were not by vertue of the Lords absolute promise that souls were united, then it were not primarily and in the first place, by vertue of the determination of the Lords will from eternity; And so union with Christ should not be a mercy flowing down from the Fountain of the Lords elective love; but rather the first and primary cause of the souls union, should be from something in the soul it self, and so quite contrary to the stream of Scripture truth; it should be *of him that willeth and runneth*, and not *of him that sheweth mercy*.

2. If it were not so, then there must be some grace acceptable to God, presupposed to be in the soul before union with Christ, unto which the Lord hath made some promise of union with him. It must be either by vertue of a conditional promise, or an absolute promise, that the soul is united: Now if by vertue of any condition, or holy quality in the soul, then such a holy quality must be conceived to be in the soul, as is acceptable unto God: Now if it were possible there could be any holy quality conceived to be in the soul, acceptable to God before union, then either the soul must receive some holy quality, that flows not from Jesus Christ, and so deny the fulness of Christ, which is contrary to that in *Col. 1. 9.* and *John 1. 16*: Or else we should conclude that some graces, some holy qualities, should be conveyed in-

to the soul, that should not be conveyed by vertue of the souls union, and so there should be a Communication of the graces of Christ unto the soul, when the soul still remains a stranger to God.

3. If there were the least quality acceptable unto God before union, then the soul should be a beloved one of God out of Jesus Christ, and it should not be by his dearly beloved Son alone in whom the Lord is well pleased.

Pre. 2. That the first proper actings of Faith in union, are ever by, or in the way of the application of those absolute promises unto their particular souls. That will appear in two things.

1. If the first actings of Faith in union, were not by particular application of those absolute promises; then the Devils Faith should hold equal proportion to the Faith of souls united to Jesus Christ. The Devils themselves do as fully believe the truth of all those pretious absolute promises, as any united soul, and do as fully expect the certain accomplishment of them unto the Church of God.

2. Then should the souls dependance upon Jesus Christ, be without the sight of the suitable ground for the dependance. The first act of Faith can have no ground but the absolute promise of God, in regard all those graces that are described in any word of God, that should seem to be conditional promises, those are not discovered at the first actings of Faith, and therefore unless the absolute promises prove a particular ground to the souls apprehension, that the soul in that absolute promise sees the Lord particularly tending himself to accept it into union with Jesus Christ, there should be no ground for that dependance.

Pre. 3.

Prem. 3. It is also granted, that this particular application of the absolute promise unto Souls, doth go before the actings of any other holy quality in those Souls. Faith being the first habit in order of nature (though not in time) that's infused into any Soul; It doth also in order of nature work and manifest itself in acting, before any other habit whatsoever; And therefore the acting of Faith in that particular application of the absolute promise, must be before there be a manifestation of any other holy quality to be in the Soul. And thence in regard this particular way in applying these absolute promises, is without any holy quality in Souls, there can be no other word but only the Lords absolute promise, to be the ground from whence this faith can arise. This is generally granted of all; And from thence take notice of these two things.

1. That the absolute general promise of God, that is holden forth as made unto the people and Church of God alone, that is a particular ground of the Souls first confidence, or adherence unto Jesus Christ.

2. That the general absolute promise of God, doth speak particularly to every Soul who attains any right or interest in it.

Secondly, I shall answer affirmatively, That it is a particular ground of Faith of assurance, or a particular evidence to assure a Souls Faith that he is united unto Jesus Christ. And that I shall open in two Conclusions.

Conclu. 1. The absolute promise is sufficient to reveal to a Souls Faith a certainty of his Union, in regard there is an equivalency in the absolute promise of God that runs to all Souls, to any particular promise that could be made: *Paul* manifested as full

full a certainty of his acceptance into Union with Christ, to be holden forth to him in the absolute promise, as if he had had a particular word from heaven, saying, thou *Paul* shalt be accepted into union with Christ: In *1 Tim. 1. 15. This is a faithfull saying, and worthy of all acceptation*: What is that? That *Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners*. Here is as far off a remote promise as can be, That *Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners*; What then? *Of whom I am chief*: As if he should have said, The Lord Christ came to save me; where he makes Christ sent into the world particularly to save his Soul: And certainly the same promise, were able to give the Soul that particular certainty that *Paul* did receive, did the same light appear from the promise as did to *Paul*. But that there is such an equivalency in what the absolute promise can give to testific union, to what a particular promise gives, appear in two things.

1. In the latitude, or largeness, and extensiveness of the promise it self. The promises that are of absolute mercies, and are declared to be the absolute will of God concerning his peoples Souls, they are all propounded as indefinite propositions, that is, without any certain bounds: In that promise, Christ came into the World to save Sinners; there is no bounds set to it, neither this kind of Sinner, or that kind of Sinner, such as are thus and thus rebellious, but Sinners. So *Mark 16. 15. Go Preach the Gospel to every creature*: Preach the Gospel, What is that? *Preach the glad tydings of Salvation*. It is as much as if Jesus Christ should have said, Go and tell every Soul, my Father is willing to accept their rebellious souls into union with my self: And unless this be receive

tendered, the Gospel is not Preached; Exclude the declaring of Gods will to every particular Soul, to receive him into Union with the Lord Christ, and you exclude the Preaching of the Gospel: And that's the reason the Angel, *Luke 2. 10.* when he brings the glad tidings of Jesus Christ, saith, *I bring glad tidings*; To whom, To such a Nation or People? No, *I bring glad tidings to all people*: There is no other bounds set but the World it self. If a man comes under the notion of a creature, he comes under the notion of the promise, he cannot say but it is the will of God to receive his Soul into Union, if he will embrace the Lord Christ.

2. It appears in regard of the expresness of the command to every Soul particularly to apply the promise, *1 John 3. 23. This is the command of God, that ye believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ*: And again, *this is the Word of God, that ye believe in the name of Jesus Christ*. Now believing can contain but two things: Either a giving credit to the truth of what the promise holds forth; And surely this cannot be meant, for the Devils themselves believe as much: Or else a receiving unto their particular Souls, what the Lord there tenders in Christ Jesus; and if you observe it, the Scripture phrase generally holds forth believing in this sence. Thence it is that believing and receiving in Scripture are put both for one, *1 John 1. 12.* Now that the extent of this command of believing reaches thus far, to a particular application of those absolute promises to themselves, will be cleared by two particulars.

1. In regard all unbelief and the fruits of it, is virtually and eminently forbidden in this command of believing. When any positive duty is enjoyned by

by God, the contrary must needs be forbidden by the same law virtually, and all the evil consequences of whatever is contrary to the duty enjoined. Now believing being enjoined, virtually unbelief and all the fruits of unbelief are forbidden. The fruits of unbelief is doubting, and so all doubting of the Lords will to fulfill his promise, of accepting the soul into union with the Lord Jesus, that's content and willing to receive Christ into Union with him, all this doubting of the will of God is there forbidden virtually, in regard it is contrary to the duty commanded, because it proceeds from the root, unbelief, which is directly contrary unto faith.

2. In regard the strength of Faith must needs be the extent of the command. The Soul is to give credit to the Lord, as a thing unquestionably certain, that the Lord is willing to receive his poor loveless Soul into Union with the Lord Christ. So that in effect the Lord doth in that command to the Soul to believe, enjoyn the Soul to receive fulness of assurance from the very promise, that the Lord is willing to receive his Soul into union with the Lord Christ. Yet do not mistake me, I do not say the command is of such an extent, that it doth expressly command every one to believe that he is one in Christ, for then the promise should command him to believe a lye, in regard the greatest number are at enmity: But the extent of the command is to assure the Soul, of the Lords willingness to receive him into union with Jesus Christ, if he be willing to receive him: And this the Lord enjoyns the most rebellious wretches wherever the Gospel comes; the first command to such rebellious Souls is to believe that God is willing to receive their rebellious Souls into union with himself.

Concl. 2.

Conclu. 2. There is as great a fulness of sufficiency in the absolute promise, to assure the soul of his union with Christ, as there is to give the soul a ground of particular dependence upon God in Christ for union. This will appear in two particulars.

1. In regard confidence of the particularity of the promise, is of the Essence and Being, both of faith of dependance, and faith of assurance. Take away particular confidence of the Lords particular will, towards such a particular soul, to receive his soul into union with Christ, and you destroy the faith of adherence : Take away the particular confidence, and there remains nothing but a bare general belief of the truth of the promise of God as it is tendered.

2. Both the confidence in the faith of dependance, and faith of assurance, are of one and the same kind. Though indeed ~~that~~ the confidence that the soul hath, when he once acts faith by way of assurance differs gradually, that is, in many degrees from the faith of dependance and adherence, yet they are both of one and the same kind, they are both substantially the same ; They are but a confidence of the Lords willingness to take his soul into union with Christ, he receiving of him : Only this differs in a circumstance of time ; That faith of assurance acts that confidence by way of the time past, that the Lord out of his good will alone hath received his soul into union with Christ ; whereas that confidence that is in the act of dependance or adherence, may work thus, that it is the Lords will now at this present to receive my soul into union with Jesus Christ. Now all men grant that the absolute promise is sufficient to
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build faith of adherence, or dependance upon; otherwise you must take away all grounds upon which a soul must believe, and you must leave a soul under a command to believe, having no bottom upon which to set his faith.

We shall now proceed to the opening of the second question, and that is,

Quest. 2. By what means doth a soul receive the infallible evidences of his union? It hath been determined, that the absolute promise of God, to give the Lord Jesus to every poor despicable, loveless, forlorn soul that will receive him, is the only unchangable ground, from whence the soul doth first gather the certain infallible evidence of his union. But now saith the soul, By what means is the promise made efficacious for this end? How comes it to pass that the bare absolute promise of God doth manifest to the particular soul that he is united to Jesus Christ?

For the answer of this question, I must first premise divers things for the right understanding of it, and then lay down the answer in positive Conclusions.

Prem. 1. First, I must premise, That the absolute promise of God hath a fulness of sufficiency in it self, to discover at all times, to every particular soul, in what condition soever, under what Temptations, in what clouds and darkness soever, that the will of God is to receive his particular soul into union with Jesus Christ; And that he should accept the good will of God, and receive Jesus Christ into union with himself. Though indeed the promise works this effect very rarely in souls, yet at all times the promise hath that sufficiency in it self, and there is no addition made by God to the promise, neither by word, nor sight, neither by way of particularizing souls, nor

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by way of comprehensiveness to make it conclude souls: Neither doth the soul build upon any thing added to the promise; But the promise it self is the absolute ground, that the soul always builds upon in receiving evidence from it. Now because the promise it self doth not at every time, and in every condition, manifest unto that soul thus his union with Christ, to whom it hath evidenced his union, therefore think some souls, it is something superadded to the promise: And some again are ready on the other side, to conclude from the position it self, that the absolute promise should give the soul assurance of Jesus Christ, That it must be from some revelation of God that is added to the promise; A kind of revelation of the souls name to be written in the book of life; and so the soul should not build upon the word of God, but upon some superadded revelation. But neither of both these must be conceived; But the promise hath always a sufficiency of light to discover to the soul the Lords willingness to receive him into union with himself. Only this promise of God, or discovery of the will of God, to be laid as the Tower of the souls assurance, must have a wise Master builder to lay it: It is with this foundation as with other foundations, when the timber is hewed and squared fit for a groundsel, it must have a wise Master builder to lay it for a foundation: So the soul must have instruction from the wisdom of God to lay this foundation, so as he may see his assurance stand firm upon it.

Prem. 2. Secondly, I must premise, That whatsoever is employed by God in a subordination to his will, for the effecting any end that is intended by God, that's the means of producing or effecting such

an end. This I premise that we may understand what is meant by means; when we say by what means is this promise made sufficient to give the soul evidence of his union; God is to be considered as the primary efficient cause, upon which all things have their dependance: And all things imployed by God for effecting that, are inferiour causes, and in respect of God himself they are called means; though in respect of created causes, some such inferiour causes may be called a principal cause. So that whatever is imployed by God, for effecting this end of assuring the soul of union with Christ, that's the means by which the promise is made effectual for that use.

Prem. 3. Thirdly, I must premise, That there are divers and various means that do commonly concur together, for effecting one and the same end, though they have divers relations unto the end, and work diversly for the effecting of it. There may be divers kinds of influences, from divers things, to one and the same end; And whatever hath influence into the end, comes under the notion of a cause, and in respect of the principal cause, it comes under the notion of a means. So in this great matter of evidencing to a soul its union with Christ, there are many things that may and do concur, for effecting that blessed end in the soul, for enabling the soul to draw from the absolute promise, the conclusion, that he is united to Jesus Christ; though those various things work in a various manner, and one have ^{one} influence into the end, and another have another influence, and so be looked at as divers in relation to this great matter of assurance.

Prem. 4. Fourthly, I must premise, That there are four or five distinctions about causes or means; that are necessary to be understood for understanding this question, By what means the promise is made sufficient, to evidence to the soul his union with Christ?

1. The soul must understand the distinction between the Principal instrumental efficient cause, and the less principal instrumental efficient cause. Though there be properly unto every action but one principal cause, yet in respect of instrumental causes, there may be many things that may have the respect of efficient causes, for the producing one and the same thing; though there can be but one principal instrumental efficient neither, unless it be co-ordinate.

2. You must understand, That the means or instrumental efficient causes, are divided again into Natural instrumental efficient causes, and Artificial. The natural instrumental cause is that which works by its own natural in-bred vertue, that is, by a proper disposition of its own, and by a power that it hath in it self, without dependance upon any created cause, though nothing that is an instrumental cause can be said to work by his own vertue, in respect of the principal efficient cause.

3. You must understand, That instrumental efficient causes are to be considered again, either as those that are mediate causes, or immediate causes. The mediate efficient cause is that which contributes something to the producing the effect; That is, that which hath some influence into the great effect of the souls assurance, either directly, or indirectly, though it be but a far off, there being many immediate things that come between, that make up the souls evidence.

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The immediate cause, that's the cause that works so immediately that nothing intervenes between the effect, which is the souls assurance and the cause. That which hath the last stroke as I may say, that's properly the immediate cause : That which being once effected in the soul, the soul doth immediately, and without intermission of time, draw the conclusion that he is united to Jesus Christ, that's the immediate efficient cause.

4. Instrumental causes are such as either solitary efficient causes, or combined efficient causes. That is, such causes as work by themselves, without others to produce such an effect ; Or else such as work by other causes not without respect : There is an efficient cause alone, and a concause with another, and both contribute assistance to the same thing.

5. These efficient instrumental causes are divided again into subordinate causes, or co-ordinate causes. That is, such instrumental causes, that though they work together, are in a subordination to one instrumental efficient cause. Or else such as produce an equal power joyntly together for the effecting the same thing. Its then that efficient instrumental causes are subordinate, when one hath the supremacy, and all have dependance upon one, though many things have influence into the same thing. And they are co-ordinate when they have equal dependance one upon another, one not being able to work without another. Now all these distinctions of causes must be understood, for a right clear understanding of this question, By what means a soul doth attain the evidence of his union ? Now these things being premised, I shall lay down the answer in positive conclusions.

Answer 1: First, I answer directly to the question, That there are divers mediate and less principal causes, that do afar off help something for the evidencing to the soul his union with Christ from the absolute promise. There are divers such causes, that are partly artificial, and partly natural: Of this nature I may reckon up divers; As the ministry of the word, in the opening and clearing the nature, the largeness of the extent, and the excellency of those absolute promises to a soul. Likewise the dispensation of the Sacraments, either of Baptism or the Lords Supper: The element of water in one, being appointed by Christ himself in the use of it, to discover the souls partaking of the death of Christ, by being buried in the water; And to signify the souls partaking of the resurrection of Christ by rising out of the water, and to consequently communion with Christ in all the effects of his death and life; Consequently sealing to the soul that Jesus Christ died for him, and lived for him. So the other Sacrament, the elements of bread and wine, being appointed by Jesus Christ to signify to the soul the breaking of the body of Christ, and the effusion of his blood; And the application of those elements to him, being elements by which his body shall be refreshed and cleaved; being appointed to shew the life and nourishment of his soul to be from Christ alone: These Sacraments in their right institution, may be instrumental immediate causes afar off, to contribute to a soul something of his union. So Prayer, Meditation, and Christian conference, enquiring into the freeness of the promise, and the latitude of it; and every spiritual ordinance of God, wherein the promises of God are brought to any remembrance, may con-

contribute something to the Souls union with Christ, which are properly artificial causes, not natural, but of a mixt kind, partly artificial and partly natural. And all these being in this kind instrumental efficient causes, they may be said to be means by which the Soul attains the infallible evidence of his union: And it is very seldom (if I may not say never) but God useth one of these means, to clear up to the Soul his union with Christ in the absolute promise.

Ans. 2. Secondly I answer, That it is commonly received that there are three more immediate joynt concurring causes, to make up to the soul the evidence of his union from the promise. Though those forenamed means do work Instrumentally for that end, yet there are some that do work more inwardly, that are commonly received to be joynt causes, working for one and the same end, I mean for assuring the soul from the promise, of his union with Christ. As

I. The Irradiation, I mean the bright shining light of Faith. That is set up as a precious Heavenly Lamp, that shines so clearly into the dark soul, that it makes the soul see in a sensible way that he doth receive the promise, and embrace the Lord Jesus given in that promise. Faith gives the soul such a feeling experience, that it doth receive the promise of Jesus Christ given even when it is receiving of it, his soul graspeth Jesus Christ so powerfully, as he feels his arms grasp Jesus Christ in the promise.

II. There is the Conclusion renewed conscience draws, by the strength of spiritual and experimental reasons, that the promise is unto his particular soul,

and that he is united unto Jesus Christ, as appears from the promise. The truth of it appears from *Rom. 8. 16. The Spirit of God beareth Witness with our Spirits, that we are Sons of God*: There is a two fold Witness, the Witness of the Spirit, and our Spirits, which can be nothing but the renewed understanding or conscience that gives the Testimony; and both of them Witness at one, and the same time, and they are both but witnessing one and the same thing, and helping the soul to draw one and the same Conclusion at the same time.

III. There is the manifestation of the true inseparable effects of union with Jesus Christ to be in the soul. That is, the souls beholding the very juice of Jesus Christ the precious Vine, flowing down into his soul, as into one of his Branches. The soul finding the same graces that are in Jesus Christ the head, drop down into his Bosom: So that the soul concludes he must needs be a Member to the Head, having influences from it.

Now there are three things to be opened about this, which are concauses which may clear up to our understandings what may be safely holden forth in these.

1. That none of these, neither the shining of Faith, nor the Testimony of Conscience, nor the inseparable effects of union, are concauses in evidencing unto the soul, the Will of God in taking the particular soul into union with Christ. The promise it self affords this light to the soul, by the sole aid of the Spirit of God, without respect to any Dispositions, Inclinations, believing qualifications, whatever can be imagined.

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2. These three are only concauses in producing to the soul the effects of that first evidence. That is, in producing in the soul the conclusion of his own union with Jesus Christ, that doth arise from the first evidence of the Lords will, to take his soul into union with Christ.

3. That it is only the first of those three things, which is the shining forth of the light of Faith, thats properly a coadjoyning cause, in the making up a souls evidence from the promise of his union with Christ. Those two latter do follow after the first clear evidence in the soul of his union with Christ from the promise, and so cannot come in as joynt concauses to make up the evidence.

Ans. 3. Thirdly I answer, There are indeed three joynt concurring causes, for the making up this ^{evidence} to the souls Faith, of its union with Christ: And that is the Spirit of God, the light of Faith, and the Witness of Conscience, taking the Witness of Conscience only for an experimental knowledge, that soul doth receive, and hath received the Lord Jesus, freely given by God to be one with the soul, so that Conscience doth only answer as it were like a precious Eccho ~~to the soul~~, the voice of the Spirit of God to the soul. The Spirit of God revealing the light of the promise, or applying the promise to the soul; The light of Faith shewing the souls receiving of the promise; And the voice of Conscience consenting to the voice of the Spirit of God, or giving the Echo to the voice of the Spirit of God in the soul.

Ans. 4. Fourthly I answer, There be some that may be said to be concauses, or joynt concurring causes, in the evidencing to the soul his union in the promise: Yet they are all but subordinate causes, to
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one prime principal cause which is the Spirit of God. Should I take these three which some have conceived to be joynt concurring causes, which is the light of Faith, the Witness of Conscience, and the manifestation of the inseparable effects of union, yet all these come in a way of Subordination to the principal, Efficient, Instrumental cause, which is the Spirit of God; As you may see if you look upon the light of Faith, 1 Cor. 2. 12. *We have received, not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God.* You see the internal Vision, or internal Light they have of any grace, of any gifts, is by the light of the Spirit of God put upon those gifts, or put into the soul to discern those gifts. So likewise of the second, the Testimony of Conscience, whatever Testimony Conscience would give, be it either through practical, or experimental reason drawn from the Word of God; Or be it only to bear Witness to the souls own act, and so taken only for a sense of the souls own beleiving; yet also this Witness of Conscience hath its Subordination to that principal cause, the Spirit of God; As Rom. 9. 1. When the Conscience is said to *bear Witness* of any good act in the soul, its said to be through the Spirit: And indeed the Conscience being altogether corrupt naturally, the habit of Spiritual Light and discerning by which it Judge, being only from the Spirit of God; Thence it must necessarily follow also, that every acting of that renewed light that the Spirit of God hath infused into the Conscience must be by the Spirit of God: For out of all question, the acting of every habit of grace received, doth as well depend upon the spirit of God, as the first infusion of it into the soul

soul did. And if you look upon the third also, which is the manifestation of all the effects of union that comes under that in 1 Cor. 2. 12. *All gifts: All gifts of grace through union, must be discerned through the Spirit of Wisdom in the heart, inabling souls to discern the things freely given them of God; As the Apostle doth well Illustrate it, v. 11, comparing the light that the Spirit which they have received gives to them to discern the gift of God, to the light of Conscience to discern what is in man: What man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God: Whereby he makes it evident, that the use of the Spirit of God dwelling in the soul, is the same for the discovering of all the workings of the soul to it, as the use of the Spirit of a man is, to discover to him the heart of man as man.*

Ans. 5. Fifthly I answer, That the Spirit of God alone is the principal most immediate and natural Instrumental efficient cause, of the promises evidencing to the soul his union with Christ. Though you see there be divers causes that may afar off have some kind of influence, yet no Influences further then they have a dependance upon the Spirit of God, working in them and through them: And however the sight of Faith, and the Testimony of Conscience, may in some measure be said to be concauses, yet the Instrumental efficient cause, that hath the *Alpha* and *Omega*, that which strikes the first and last stroke, that assures the souls Faith that he is united to Christ, thats the Spirit of God alone; Its that which set on work all other means for that end.

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Now that the Spirit of God alone is this principal, efficient, instrumental cause, I shall clear to you by some demonstrations.

I. It appears by the general office of the Spirit of God. The Spirit is designed to that office alone to reveal truths, or to guide souls into all truth, as appears *John 16. 43. When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth, [and observe why] for he shall not speak of himself, but whatever he shall hear that shall he speak: He shall have a Commission from Heaven as it were, to lead them into all truth.* Now in this guiding the soul into all truth, there are two offices that the Spirit of God is designed to: First, the making known of truth to the soul. Secondly, the application of truth made known.

First, The making known of truth to the soul. It is the office of the Spirit to cast in the precious principles of Spiritual knowledge, whereby the soul should be any ways apprehensive of any truth.

This making known of truth to the soul consists in three things.

1. In the communicating of Spiritual light to the soul, or in giving the soul a Spiritual eye of discerning. We are all like poor *Bartimeus, born Blind; The Natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, for they are Foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are Spiritually discerned; 1 Cor. 2. 14;* Now it is the office of the Spirit alone to make a precious Eye Salve, that may restore spiritual sight to the soul, and make it capable of discerning truth; Therefore it is said in *1 John 5. 20. In Conversion we are said to receive a mind to know him, that is a disposition to know him, an understanding capable of knowing him.*

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2. The Spirit presents truth to that Spiritual eye ~~that~~ that he hath communicated. Therefore in *Eph.*

1. 17. The Apostle prays for *a spirit of wisdom and revelation* : Not only *a spirit of wisdom*, that is, an internal spiritual habit of spiritual light to discern truth ; But *a spirit of revelation* also, that is, of manifesting the truth unto the Soul.

3. In making known spiritual truths, the spirit of God removes all impediments that do prevent the discerning of truths presented. Though the spirit gives eyes, and presents truths, there may be such impediments between the Souls eyes and the truth, that may prevent the Souls discerning. There may be some films, or some corrupt humours, some film of lust or selfishness that may hinder the sight of the truth.

Secondly, The Spirit makes application of the truth known. The first truth that God discovers to a Soul, which is his own sin, his guilt, and danger of condemnation, must as well be applied to the Soul by the Spirit, as revealed to the Soul by the Spirit : Therefore *Jahn 16. 8.* The office of the Spirit is to *reprove, or convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment* ; to make it clear to the conscience of every particular man that there is a judgment for him, that he is one of those sinful wretches that believe not. That the Spirit also must make this application, will appear in two things.

1. In that there should be an equal and proportionable sense, of the effects of Sin and Wrath, according to the measure and degree of every sinners understanding sin and wrath. If it were not the Spirit alone, that did make application of the truth made known, it could not be then, but so far as e-
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very Soul did understand what Sin and Wrath was, the effect both of the knowledge of Sin and of Wrath would remain in such a heart : But alas experience enough teacheth us, that many sinners that have large knowledge of the nature of sin, and of the consequences and effects of sin, which is Wrath and condemnation, yet have not the knowledge of this effect in the least manner. The effects are two : Condemnation in the Souls Judgment ; Horrour and anguish in the sense of condemnation. He that understands sin rightly in the least degree, understand it to be damnable, therefore the effects of it must needs be condemnation in his own Soul : But nothing is more common than for men to confess every sin to be damnable, and to confess themselves to be sinners, but far off from drawing a sentence of condemnation ; They will be sure enough of the conclusion, though they conclude sin to be damnable, yet they will not conclude themselves to be in a damnable condition. So if you look upon the second effect that follows the knowledge of Sin, and that's Horrour and Sense of the dreadfulnes of that Condemnation : Though it may be sometimes a soul goes so far, as almost to conclude it self to be in a Damned condition, yet far is it from letting it take effect upon his heart, so as to lie heavy upon his heart as an intolerable burthen. Therefore it is plain ; not only the revealing of the truth, but the application of truth revealed, depends upon the Spirit of God : The Spirit must say, here is thy Sin, and yonder is the Pit of Misery, before a man can apply those truths to his own soul.

2. It must be the Spirit of God that makes the application, in regard the Terroures and Horrors for Sin are appropriated by the Scripture to the Spi-

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rit, and to his work alone. Whence you shall see *Rom.* 8. 16, Fear is said to be the work of the Spirit of Bondage: *You have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear*, that is, the Spirit of Bondage again working Fear, and Anguish, and Vexation of soul in respect of the guilt of Sin.

2. The Spirit alone must be the principal efficient cause in evidencing to the soul from the promise his union with Christ, in regard of the Spirit's particular and peculiar office that it is appointed unto by Jesus Christ. The Spirit hath its office, and that is to Comfort and Refresh the souls of the peculiar ones of Christ. Hence the name of the Spirit is, the Comforter, *John* 16. 17. Now this being the peculiar office of the Spirit of Christ, to comfort those that are the Members of Jesus Christ, it must needs be, that that must needs be the principal Instrumental efficient cause in revealing to the soul his union with Christ in the promise. And that will appear in two things.

1. In regard the Word of promise alone is the ground of all Consolation unto the souls Faith. Now the Spirit should give souls but small comfort, could he not give them Comfort unto Faith; did not the Lord reveal the everlasting Inheritance to be theirs; everlasting Union and Communion with Christ to be theirs, and then let them see Holiness in them to be a drop of the Inheritance, that the soul shall feed it self with to Eternity; the Comfort were but small.

2. In regard it must be by appropriating the thing promised, that the promise is able to afford any Consolation. There must be two things for the soul to receive comfort from the promise: *Propriety*, and *Security*.

Security. The Soul must see propriety, or else no love, at least no satisfaction to the heart, and while there is not the satiating of the soul there is no comfort. Comfort is the content the soul hath in beholding his desired satisfaction : Now whatever the soul sees, it satisfieth not till it hath a propriety in it. And till there be a security in that propriety, he is not satisfied, fears and doubts arise of losing it again. Could the soul see union with Christ, unless the voice say thus, I am thine, and will never separate from thee, it would give no true comfort : The soul would be more afraid of the loss of that happiness, then rejoice in the present good enjoyed.

3. It will appear in regard there is nothing sufficient to evidence to the soul his union from the promise satisfiably but the Spirit. There must be an equal authority in the revelation to the soul of his union with Christ, to that that was in the revelation to the soul of his Sin, Guilt, and Subjection to everlasting Damnation, before the soul can receive any satisfaction, or any true freedom from those dreadful Horrors that possess a soul, upon the true revelation of his dreadful estate of Sin, Wo, and Misery. Now its apparent that it is the Spirit of God alone, that reveals with Power, the Condemnation of the soul through his own Sin : And therefore unless the Spirit of God should come again with another voice, which hath as great a power to pronounce the absolution of the soul from Condemnation through Christ, the soul could never receive any satisfaction, nor be free from receiving the sentence of Condemnation in himself.

III. The Scripture it self testifies that it is the proper, peculiar office of the Spirit: Ineed quote only that one place, *Rom. 8. 16. The Spirit it self beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God.* When he would rise to the highest evidence, he rises to that, *the Spirit of God Witnesseth with our Spirit.* There are two or three things in the Text that will clear it, that it must be meant the special operation of the Spirit it self, and that by a special peculiar application of the promise.

1. It is said it is *the Spirit it self.* Intimating it is not the gifts of the Spirit, nor the graces of the Spirit, as sometimes the Spirit is taken in Scripture: But in a way of distinction from graces, he puts the Emphasis upon it; *the Spirit it self; that Witnesseth with our Spirits;* Intimating that it is the person of the Spirit, whose office it is thus to Witness to the soul.

2. He puts it as a distinct Witness, *it Witnesseth with our Spirits.*

3. It is by particular application: *It Witnesseth to our Spirits that we are the Sons of God.* It Witnesseth Adoption: Now we cannot believe our Adoption without the Witness of the Spirit, and that from a Word; and therefore that can be nothing but the application of the promise to the soul. Thus you have the second question opened, that is, by what means a soul doth receive the infallible evidence of his union. There is a third question.

Quest. 3. *In what manner doth the soul receive the first infallible evidence of his union with Christ? It was concluded from the first Question, That the absolute promise of God receive any Poor, Despicable, Loveless, Forlorn Soul that would, into Union with the Lord*

Jesus, was the first infallible ground of the Souls evidence of union: And it was concluded that there were various means that did concur together, to inable the soul to receive his union from this absolute promise; Though there was one immediate means that works in the promise, assuring the Souls Faith in the promise that he is united to Jesus Christ. The Question now remains, how this means doth produce this end? Or how the Lord worketh in and through these means to make the absolute promise efficacious and effectual to manifest to the poor doubting soul his Union with Christ?

For the opening of it I must premise something for the right understanding of it, and then lay down the answer to it in positive conclusions.

Prem. 1. First I must premise, That all the Influences that any means whatsoever do contribute unto the evidencing unto any doubtful soul, his union with the Lord Christ, only produce the same kind of effects, in that soul that doth receive the evidence of his union with Christ. As suppose it is through seeking the face of God in prayer, that the Lord doth at one time bring to mind the absolute promise, in the clearness of light it holds forth, and makes application of that promise for the satisfying of the soul about his union with Christ. And suppose another time the Ministry of the Word is appointed by God for the effecting of this end; Still there is the same effect begotten by these various means, whereby the soul is inabled to receive the evidence of his union.

Prem. 2. Secondly I shall premise, That all the Influences that any means do contribute, for the evidencing from the promise the souls union with Christ, are comprehended under the Influences of the spi-

spirit of God alone. So that the efficacy of the word, or of prayer, or any ordinance towards the effecting of that blessed end in the soul, may properly be said to be the efficacy of the spirit of God, in regard those means contribute not the least in themselves (otherwise than the spirit of God employs them as his own instruments) for assuring to the soul his faith in Christ from the promise.

Prem. 3. Thirdly, I must premise, That in regard of the manner of the working of the spirit of God, for assuring the souls faith of union in the promise, that the spirit of God hath not limited himself to any constant particular order, in assuring unto souls their union with Christ from the promise. The spirit of God is truly the spiritual wind, that blows where, and how it listeth. There is no limitation propounded in the word, whereby it should appear the spirit should bind himself, to work in the same order in all souls, to evidence to them their union with Christ. And in like manner the spirit of God hath set no bounds to himself, of any degree of those effects that it doth produce to souls, whereby the promise is made efficacious, to assure to the souls faith his union with Christ, but it works variously in the heart.

Prem. 4. Fourthly, I must premise, that the explication of the manner of the Spirits working in assuring to the Soul from the promise his union with Christ, to the full and life of it, is altogether unspeakable and inexpressable. Surely that in 1 Cor. 2.9. is meant only of those Gospel joys that are the effects of this union, that eye never saw, nor ear never heard, neither did it ever enter into the heart of man (as man) to conceive the things that God hath

laid up for those that love him. And likewise well may that place be applied, that no man knows the mind of God but the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 2. 11, 12. Neither doth any man or Angel know those secret discoveries of the Lords mind, and opening of his heart to the Souls Faith, whom he doth assure from the promise that he is united unto Christ.

Prem. 5. There is a fifth premise, Though the Spirit of God neither binds it self in order nor degree, nor is expressed to the life of it in the soul, when he doth assure to the Souls faith his union with Christ, yet the Spirit keeps its constant order in respect of the effects it doth produce in the Soul, to whose faith it doth assure his union with Christ from the promise. The effects of the spirit are such in every Soul in this work, that they have such a near relation to the assurance it self, that the soul receives from the promise, that those effects are altogether unspeakable from that evidence of assurance. If those effects perish or decay, the certainty and assurance the soul hath from the promise perish and decay: And if those effects do but live in the soul, the evidence the soul hath from the promise is maintained; they live together, and die together.

Now these effects that the Spirit of God doth produce in every soul, to whom it doth manifest his union with Christ from the promise, in some measure or degree, are these five, (in the opening of which you shall receive the positive answer to this great question.)

First, The Spirits Illumination:

Secondly, The Spirits Irradiation of the Gospel to the Soul.

Thirdly, The Spirits conviction of the Conscience in the Soul.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The Spirits excitation, or stirring up the habits of faith infused into the Soul.

Fifthly, The Spirits Attestation, or witness unto the Soul, the Spirits passing the determination finally upon the Souls whole estate. These five kinds of effects are produced by the spirit from the promise, that the soul is united to the Lord Jesus.

First, The manner in which this Spirit works, is by the Illumination of the soul: *The spirits* You shall read *Eph. 1. 18.* That the *A-* *Illuminati-* *postle* praying that the *Ephesians* might *on.* understand the hope of their Calling

[that is the great things hoped for, in their calling, and the glorious privileges that they are called out to hope and wait for] his prayer is that they might have *the spirit of wisdom and revelation*; To what end? *That the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they might know what is the hope of their calling.* Observe it, The very first spiritual work of the spirit of God to this end, is for spiritual enlightning of the soul.

Now the work of the spirit in enlightning consists in three things.

First, In the infusion of greater degrees of divine light into the soul.

Secondly, In the removal of all impediments from the eye of the soul, or from the understanding of the soul, that should prevent the souls seeing, or discerning the divine light infused.

Thirdly, In the quickening or stirring up, or putting into act and exercise, the habits of divine light, that the spirit of God hath infused.

First, this Illumination is an infusion of greater degrees of divine light into the soul. The soul sits altogether in darkness, untill the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shines into it in some measure, *Eph. 5. 8.* Now though there be some habitual divine light infused by the spirit of God, into the understanding of every soul that is united to Jesus Christ, yet there is after union, a continual increase of that divine light: And therefore you shall see *Eph. 1. 18.* The Apostle prays, *that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened:* Now if you read the whole Chapter, you shall see, they were Saints, that were enlightened already. So that this work of the spirits enlightening, is the strengthening of the poor weak feeble pur-blind eye of the soul; and as we partake of this divine light, so we grow up unto the perfect day, till we be like Jesus Christ himself, in whom is light and no darkness at all.

The Second thing wherein this work consists is the removal of all impediments, that do hinder the exercise of this divine light, that is infused into the soul. By this spiritual light infused, the sight of the eye may be strengthened, and yet through some distempered humours, a film may grow over the eyes, that it is able to discern no object; some waterish humour, or some mote or dust may prevent the seeing of the eye; There may be some films of corruption, and of distempers, many malignant humours, (as I may say) and rheumes that may gather together in the soul, and prevent that sight we have received from the

the spirit : And therefore it is the next work of the spirit, after the infusion of greater degrees of divine light, to pluck out of the souls eye all the motes, to take off all the films that might hinder the souls spiritual sight. Though at first we have received a faculty of seeing, we are like the blind man that Christ cured, he saw men walking like trees, we see the promise afar off.

There are two sorts of these hellish fogs, or mists or beams, that the Devil chiefly labours to keep in the souls spiritual eye, to prevent the soul from a right use of the divine spiritual light received ; And both these must be removed by the spirit of God, before there can be assurance in the soul by the promise, that he is united to Jesus Christ.

There is first the hellish mist of the principles of darkness.

Secondly, the hellish mist of the darkness of corruption.

First, There is the hellish mist of the principles of darkness. These are like the rheumes that distill from the brain into the eyes, whereby the sight is prevented. *Mist of the principles of darkness.* And the hellish mists of darkness of corruption, are like the distemper of Melancholly or Choler, that have their original from the Liver, and so fume into the souls eyes and prevent his sight. Or rather, the first is like to a false coloured glass, that makes all things look of the same colour. It were worth the while to consider of these principles of darkness ; I shall name but some of the chief of them.

The first principle of darkness is, That the Lord Christ is tendered to no souls, but such as truly see, and are truly sensible of their want of Christ. Saith the soul, I see there is a fulness in the Lord Jesus tendred, but saith the soul it is only to such as have a sight of their want of Christ, and groan heavily under that want, and I know not whether ever I had a sense of my want of Christ; alas I have a blockish heart, I am an ignorant wretch, I have a blind understanding, I dare not trust my deceitfull heart, I fear I never had a true sight of the want of Christ, and therefore I dare not believe, (least I should presume) that Christ is tendered unto me. This is a main principle of darkness; and that it is so, I shall make appear briefly in two things.

1. Thy conceiving the Lord Christ is tendred only to those that see the want of Christ, must suppose either a true spiritual discerning to be communicated to the soul, that doth not come from Jesus Christ; Or else, that there may be a light remaining in the soul from the relicks of nature, which might let the soul see his absolute indispensable necessity of Christ, or else he is undone for ever. Now observe what a principle of darkness this is; It takes away the peculiar office of Jesus Christ, which is, *to open the blind eyes and give them sight, Isa. 42. 7. Rev. 3. 18.*

2. Thou must conceive, that the soul should have received Jesus Christ, before he is tendred to him. Now no man dare own there should be a spiritual light in the soul, before the Lord Christ heals his blindness; And no man can conceive there should be the discerning of a spiritual object without a spiritual light; *The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit,*

spirit, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. 2. 14. And for the second, that a man should receive Jesus Christ before he be tendered to him, this every man abhors as a great absurdity. So that it is clear that this is a principle of darkness, one of the moles the Devil would keep in the souls eyes. But it is to be observed, there are two truths about this thing, that the Devil misses in propounding it as a glass to the soul.

1. That there is no soul that receiveth Jesus Christ, but hath a true sight, and in some measure a true sense of his want of Christ, and of the indispensable necessity of him. Though no true spiritual discerning can go before the tender of Jesus Christ, yet thus far it is true, that at the same instant the Lord allures the heart to accept of Jesus Christ into union, he doth beget a true spiritual sight of his absolute necessity of Christ.

2. There is a second truth that is narrowly missed here, and that is, That this spiritual sight of the souls absolute indispensable want of Christ, is communicated to the soul by the spirit of God, working through the offer of Jesus Christ to the soul. Though some conceive there are some things that may be called preparations, not begotten by the Gospel, but as they distinguish, by the Law separate from the Gospel; yet they all grant, that no true grace, either of light, sight, or sense, is conveyed any way but through the Gospel of Christ, and is instrumentally an effect of the Gospel of Christ, Now that which is an effect of the Preaching of the Gospel of Christ, must be an effect of the tender of Christ to the soul, for that is the effect of the
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the Gospel, to tender Jesus Christ to the poor despicable loveless soul. Now that this is a principle of darkness, I shall prove from Scripture. All those promises of Scripture that offer Christ freely must be expunged, if this be a principle of light, as *Isa.* 55. 1. *Rev.* 22. 17. *John* 6. 37. Where the invitation is free, whoever will let him come; If he have but a will, let him be what he will.

A Second principle of darkness is, That there must be a sight of the actings of the good will of God to the Soul, before the Soul can believe any good will of God intended to the Soul in Christ.

That is thus, saith the Soul, surely there must be a sight of some holy disposition, there must be a beholding of some readiness to depart from sin, and some casting off the principles of corruption, there must be a heart seeking after God, and praying, and supplicating God, before the Soul may conceive the Lord intends any good will to it in Christ. Now the darkness that is in this principle will appear in opening four consequences flowing from it.

1. If any such holy disposition or inclination be to be discerned in a Soul before he is to believe the Lords intending good will to his Soul in Christ, then some particular effect of favour, or some acting of the Lords good will, should be received by a Soul besides the Lords promise, and so should not be conveyed through the receiving of the promise unto the Soul: And so consequently the Lord should convey Grace into Souls out of and beyond the bounds of his own Covenant of Grace.

2. If any of these actings of Grace were to be seen in the Soul, before it believes the Lords good will, then

then should Special Grace be conveyed to the Soul, before engrafting into Christ. So that life should come down from Jesus Christ into the Soul, and it should partake of the influences of Jesus Christ, and of the Graces of Christ, before he receiveth Jesus Christ himself: And upon this ground the Soul should bring forth good fruit, before it be engrafted into Jesus Christ, and become a good stock or good tree; and so expressly contrary to the Scripture, an evil tree should bring forth good fruit, a Soul in enmity to God should bring forth holy dispositions.

3. If the Soul should behold the actings of the good will of God towards his Soul, before he believes the Lord intends good will to his Soul in Christ, then must the Soul conceive that he may see his own Soul beloved actually of God, (even for the present) before the receiving of the Lord Jesus Christ, to make atonement or reconciliation to God for him. The Soul must then conceive that there should be acts of friendship from God to the Soul, before the Lord Christ should step in to make up the union of peace and agreement, before there should be reconciliation.

4. If the Soul should of necessity see the actings of Grace in his Soul, before he see the Lord intends good will to his Soul in Christ, then a divine word should not be the primary or principal ground of the Souls faith, but rather the Graces, or the actings of Gods good will discerned in the Soul, and consequently all the foundation of such a believing Soul, should be meerly in the Soul it self. Now nothing is more directly contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture, holding forth the ground of faith, than this. *Abraham*, who is set forth as a pattern of Believers,

lievers, his faith was onely built upon the word of God, giving authority to it, from the authority of the Speaker, *Rom. 4. 20, 21.*

A third Principle of Darknes is this, That it is
Principle of Presumption for the soul to beleive, or
darkness. to receive the promise of Jesus Christ, so long as the soul seeth nothing but rebellion, and Disobedience, and Enmity in his heart against God. This is another Hell-bred principle of darkness, that smells much of the smoke that comes out of the bottomles pit, to darken the light of the Lord Jesus. And that this is a principle of darkness, will appear by some few considerations.

1. In regard there can be no rebellion, nor no enmity healed but by vertue received from Jesus Christ. Sin receiveth its deadly wound only upon the Cross of Jesus Christ, and it is by vertue of the application of the intendment of the death of Jesus Christ, that any lust cometh to be crucified in any Soul. He alone is the Spiritual Physician that heals all distempers: He alone is the spiritual Conqueror to subdue all the powers that lift up their heads against the glorious Crown of Heaven. Now there can be none of this vertue received from Jesus Christ, but only by fleeing unto Christ, and there is no fleeing unto Christ but by believing. So that upon this consideration, that must needs be a principle of darkness, that should keep off from the only healer of all his rebellion, conceiving he may not receive him while he is rebellious, seeing he can never be otherwise but rebellious, nor can ever have the astringes of his rebellion abated in a right way but by receiving of Jesus Christ.

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2. The neglect of receiving the Lord Jesus revealed in the Gospel to the soul, maketh the Rebellion to be of a more Scarlet Die. The more gloriously the Lord reveals his mind to a soul, the more dreadful is the Rebellion of that soul, that neglects Obedience to that mind of God revealed. Now before the tender of the Lord Jesus, there was but a little Glory of the revelation of the mind of God in the Law, that which is accounted no Glory in respect of the revelation of the mind of God in the Gospel, 2 Cor. 3. 10. There is such a transcendent glory in the revelation of the mind of God in the Gospel, that every one that neglects that Glory so revealed, proves a transcendent Rebel, a Rebel of the highest kind, *Hebr, 2, 3. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation?*

3. In regard the Lord Christ must be received by every soul to take away all the Rebellion, and all the Degrees of Rebellion, that every soul hath contracted the guilt of to himself. Wo everlasting to that soul, that commits but one act of Rebellion to cast it upon Jesus Christ; The weight of that one Rebellion will sink the soul in hell for ever: And therefore in regard every act of Rebellion must be cast upon the Lord Jesus, the soul ought therefore upon the sight of his Rebellion to come to the Lord Jesus, and receive him, that he may free the soul by taking that Rebellion upon himself; For seeing it is impossible but all those Rebellions must at last be cast upon the neck of Christ, and Christ must bear them, the argument would keep off the soul for ever from receiving the Lord Christ, as well as keep off for a time, in regard the principle of Rebellion cannot but be acting, so long as the union is not made up
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between Christ and the soul. Yet there are two things to be observed about this, that are truths.

1. That it is Presumption indeed for any soul to receive the Lord Jesus, that he might have liberty to Rebel. This indeed were to Sin, that Grace might abound : This were to take the Devil by the right hand, and to make a League, a Covenant of Death with him ; This were odious and abominable in the eye of the Lord Jesus.

2. This is truth, that it is Presumption for any soul to live or walk in any Wickedness, in respect the Lord Jesus hath satisfied for his Rebellions. In these two cases it were cursed desperate Presumption, for a soul to have a thought of the Lord Christ belonging to him : But to apply the Lord Christ to the poor Rebellious soul, that hath nothing but rebellion working in his heart to God, that there might be a Friendship between Christ and him, that the Wall of Enmity might be broken down, and that there might be a precious amity between God and him ; to come thus is no Presumption, but the command of God to every soul.

Fourthly, A fourth Principle of *Principle of darkness* darkness is this, That the person of the Lord Christ considered as filled with all glorious excellency, Grace, Holiness, and all compleat perfection, is to be the object of the souls Faith. That is thus, that the soul is to receive the Lord Christ his own person, and to receive him out of love to his person ; and that the soul comes but Hypocritically, so long as he receives him by any other act of Faith, that doth not work towards the excellencies that are in the person of Jesus Christ. Saith the soul, every one would be content

to have Jesus Christ as a Saviour, to save from Sin ; but this is but an Hypocritical coming to Jesus Christ. This is another woful principle of darkness; And this will appear by divers Considerations.

1. The Lord Christ as a Saviour is propounded to the soul, as the first proper object of his Faith. That is, as Jesus Christ was made Sin, and made a Curse through Sin, for poor despicable sinful souls; that is to say, Jesus Christ Crucified for Sin, to save poor sinfull souls, that must otherwise have sunk under the burden of Sin, into the pit of everlasting Wo. This you shall see is the way in which Jesus Christ was represented to believing souls, both in the time of the Law, and in the time of the Gospel. In the time of the Law it is apprehended, the greatest representation of Jesus Christ was those typical Sacrifices, the shedding of the blood of Bulls and Goats for the Remission of Sin, as you may see *Hebr. 9. 22. Without shedding of blood there was no Remission*: Now this was to signify Jesus Christ Crucified, as the object of those believing *Jews Faith*. Look also into the times of the Gospel and you shall find Jesus Christ as a Saviour, as Crucified for Sin, to be looked at as the first object of every Believers Faith, considering Faith as saving: You shall see it in *1 Cor. 2. 2.* That Paul comprehends all his Preaching under this, to manifest Jesus Christ Crucified to be the object of their Faith, that is, Jesus Christ as a Saviour, as dying for Sin. Therefore Faith is called Faith in the Blood of Christ, *Rom. 3. 24, 25.* Also the Sacraments appointed for the Sealing of the promise, do hold forth Christ as a Saviour: Look upon the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, It holds forth the rending and breaking of the Body of Christ, and
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the pouring out of his Blood, and therefore it is called the Remembrance of his death. Look upon the other Sacrament, the Burying under Water, and Rising from under the Water, holds forth Jesus Christ Dying, and Rising; Thus primarily and properly they hold forth Jesus Christ as a Saviour. And that the Lord Christ thus as he is a Saviour, is the first object of Faith properly as saving, will appear in two particulars.

1. In regard the formal reason or the special respect and consideration of Jesus Christ, as he is the object of Faith, considered as saving, must be something that is in Jesus Christ, that doth procure that Salvation. Jesus Christ considered as the object of uniting Faith, must be considered under some notion whereby he doth procure this union, and merit or purchase the union; Between the act and the object there must be a Similarity, a kind of likeness, and near Similitude and Relation.

2. Jesus Christ considered in his personal excellency, in his precious Beauty and Glory, is rather the object of Love, than the object of Faith, that is, the object of Affiance and Dependence: Christ is not properly to be depended upon as he is Holy, but as he is appointed by God as a Rock to lay the hope of Salvation upon, that is, as a Mediator and Saviour.

II. It appears it is a Principle of Darkeness, In regard the most special access of Souls unto Christ is as he is a Saviour unto souls. The most pressing arguments that are prest upon souls to constrain them to come to Jesus Christ, are, that they might come for Salvation: You shall see it in that Declaration of the Commission of the Apostles themselves, 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20.

20. Now we are *Embassadors for Christ*, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christs stead, be ye Reconciled to God; As if he should say thus, God hath appointed his Gospel, that we should go out to poor rebels to invite them to come and accept of propositions of peace: And you see the reason of this, v. 21, *For he hath made him to be sin for us, that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*: That is, that we might have the righteousness that God doth convey through him. And in *Heb. 7. 25.* you shall see what is held forth to be the office of Jesus Christ now in heaven; *He is able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* I pray observe it, here is the lowest act of faith expressed, *coming to God by Christ*, and you see the coming is for Salvation.

3. Christ considered as a Saviour is primarily futable unto souls. Christ in his personal excellency is futable unto Angels, and Angels will count it their glory to have him their Head, and be married to him as a Spouse: But it is only as he is considered as a Saviour, that he is primarily futable unto Souls here below, in regard the first thing that is necessary for such Souls is Salvation. And thence you shall see, it is the name that God puts upon him, *his name shall be called Jesus*, (a Saviour) and the reason is, why? *For he shall save his people from their sins, Mat. 1. 21.* So that it appears this is another principle of darkness, to perswade souls not to come to Jesus Christ for Salvation. Yet there are two things to be observed here.

1. That many excellencies that are contained in the person of Jesus Christ, by vertue of the hypo-
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statical union of the humane nature with the second person in the Trinity, may have efficacy upon a soul to allure him, to come. God may let the beams of his beauty so shine forth, as may ravish the heart in his coming; and though primarily the Souls faith is established upon him as a Saviour, yet his love may at the same time close with all the excellencies of Jesus Christ.

2. The love of the personal excellency of Jesus Christ, is an infallible consequence of the Souls coming to Christ, and flows and proceeds from the Souls receiving the Lord Christ as a Saviour, though there be no such true love before coming to Jesus Christ for Salvation.

The fifth Principle of Darknes is, That there must be a proportion between the
Principle of Souls sorrow for sin, and sin it self,
darkness. before it may apply the promise of Jesus Christ. Saith the Soul, it is common among Divines to lay down this principle, That a Soul must drink so many buckets full of the tears of repentance, as he hath drank of the stolln waters of sin: And to this purpose saith the soul, you shall see that great sinners had always great sorrow; Those that were the murderers of Christ (*Act. 2. 36, 37.*) were pricked at the heart, they were much wounded before they had a promise applyed to to them: So it is observed saith the Soul, that Paul that was formerly Saul, being a notorious sinner, a blasphemer, a murderer of the Saints, he was filled with abundance of sorrow before God applyed comfort to him, *Act. 9.* compared with *Rom. 7. 11.* Sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. So *Luke 7. 36, 37,* The woman that was

was a great sinner, and called *ἀμαρτωλός*, the sinner; the woman that was a sinner: (Say Divines, every one is a sinner, but this woman is called a sinner by way of eminency, passing the ordinary degree of sin) now this woman had great sorrow (v. 38.) before she received any word of pardon from Christ, she wept and washed his feet with her tears: As she drank in buckets full of sin, so she wept buckets full of tears. Now that this is a principle of darkness, I shall make it clear thus.

1. That there is an impossibility that there should be any proportion between a souls sorrow for sin, and a souls sin. Every iniquity is a transgression that hath a kind of infiniteness, in regard of the object against whom it is committed, which is against the infinite God: Now the sorrow of the soul can never rise thus high, because it can never be so futable to the will of God, as the other was directly contrary to his will. So that you must understand the meaning of all Divines to be this (as some of them distinguish it) not that there should be an Arithmetical proportion, but a Geometrical proportion between sin and sorrow; That is, not that there should be a proportionable sorrow to sin, but the greater sorrow where there have been the greatest sins.

2. It appears, In that the Lord hath left himself to his liberty, in the afflicting Consciences for sin, before, and in, and after Conversion. God is a free agent, and according to his own pleasure he fills one soul with greater degrees of horreur and terrour, and lets him lie longer under woe and anguish before he give him any quiet of spirit; He strikes one soul to death with the keen arrow of compunction, shoots at the

heart of him, whereas he lets another sinner be set upon the rock higher than himself: some souls God doth prick their hearts with a needle, and others he puts a sword to them, like a Chyrurgion that lanceth one sore above another, and yet brings both to a perfect cure: You read of nothing in *Lydia*, but only the Lord opened her heart; And *Paul* was struck with trembling and astonishment; You read of nothing in the *Jaylor* but crying out what to do to be saved, being in fear of perishing, and presently God gives him joy in believing, and calms his spirit.

3. In regard there is no command nor injunction from God, that a soul should attain the least degree of sorrow for sin, before he should dare to apply the Lord Jesus, and receive him tendered to his poor rebellious worthless soul. The first command that God lays upon every rebel is to accept of a Mediator: God in order of nature first enjoyns the soul to receive Jesus Christ tendered, before the doing any thing whatsoever, before the sending up one sigh to God, or breathing out one petition; in regard the Lord commands all poor sinners at enmity with him, to come near to him only through a Mediator, and no coming by a Mediator, till they apply the Mediator to be a Mediator: And therefore it is said in *1 John 3. 23. It is the command of God that ye believe in the Lord Jesus, whom he hath sent.* And so again *John 6. 29. This is the work of God, that ye believe on whom he hath sent:* As if there were no other work of God but this; But the meaning is, that this is the prime principal work, without which all other are but works of darkness.

4. In regard the Lord takes no pleasure nor delight in the person of any sinner most dejected and plunged

plunged into the deepest gulf of sorrow for his sin, before he applys the Lord Jesus tendered to his soul, more than he did in that soul before there was any of that sorrow. Do not mistake me, I do not say, that the Lord does as much abhor a sinner that is now forbearing the acts of his enmity against God, and is fain to cry after God, as much as the acts of sin before gradually; But yet I say, there is as true an abhorrence in the bosom of God, of all those prayers, mournings and tears, as there was of those acts of sin, the difference is only in degree. Saith he *Tit. 1. 15. To the impure all things are impure, whilst the mind and conscience is defiled*: And who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? whilst the soul is altogether unclean, it is impossible a clean desire and motion, or a clean tear can come from thence: So that now the soul is looked upon as an enemy, as a Rebel, a Traitor to the Crown of the Lords glory, whilst he remains a refuser of the Lord Jesus tendered, though he be brought to great degrees of mourning.

5. In regard the nearest proportion of sorrow that can be attained unto for sin, must proceed from applying the Lord Jesus tendered. The soul can never discern what the degree, or the heinousness of his sin was, till he beholds the Lord Jesus accepting his poor despicable, rebellious, loveless soul. Therefore it is worthy your observation, that the same woman that is called *the sinner*, by way of emphasis and eminency, *Luke 7. 37.* drank deeply of the cup of sorrow, whose tears flowed forth in abundance, that she could wash the feet of Jesus Christ; This womans sorrow did not proceed from a sight of her sin, before her applying the Lord Jesus tendered, but from

sight of the Lord Jesus accepting such a despicable desperate sinner as she was : The depths of sorrow were never broken up in her heart, till she saw the arm of the Lord Jesus reached out to embrace her poor despicable soul. You shall see it plain if you compare *v. 37, 38.* with *v. 47, 48.* The whole discourse between Jesus Christ and the *Pharisees* concerning her, is worth our observation for the explaining of it ; when Jesus sees this woman come and wash his feet, he knew the *Pharisees* hearts rose against her, because *she was a sinner* : Now Jesus put forth a parable of similitude, *Simon, saith he, there were two debtors ; the one ought five hundred pence, and the other fifty, and when they had nothing to pay, the creditor frankly forgave them both : Tell me therefore which of them will love him most ?* Simon answered and said, *I suppose he to whom he forgave most :* saith he, *thou hast rightly judged.* Now observe it, when Jesus Christ had opened to the *Pharisees* this parable, it amounts to this, The cause of her mourning is from the sense of the Lords forgiving her, for she loved much ; *And he said unto her, thy sins are forgiven :* This he opens to be the cause of her sorrow, that she saw Jesus Christ had exercised compassion to her : She saw the love of Christ so infinite, so unspeakable, his compassions so incomprehensible, that though she had been such a desperate wretch, that Satan had had his Throne in her heart, though she had been the Ring-leader of sinners in a City, yet he was ready to wash her forlorn soul, and make her clean, and this made her she knew not how to express her love, but she wept : So that the cause of her tears was not so much the sense of her sin, but the having so much forgiven her. So it is observed

of *Peter*, when he could deny Christ thrice, and forswear him, and not Weep, when Christ looks upon him, his Heart melts and he Weeps bitterly: What *Peter*? dost deny me? what, me that left the Throne of my Glory, to stand here before the Judgment Seat, saith the look of Christ to the Conception of *Peter*? this melts his Heart.

The sixth Principle of Darknes is this, That it is very Dangerous for any soul to apply to himself the Lord Jesus too soon. It is commonly illustrated by this Similitude: If a Chirurgion applies some healing Salve to a dangerous sore, before the Corrosives have had their proper effects, if he doth not by Corrosives first eat out all the dead Flesh, and by Tents ransack the Wound to the very bottom, though the Wound be skinned over, it will fester and Ranckle again, and that to the danger of the Patients Life. Likewise, saith the soul, it is thus in regard of the Wound of Sin: If any spiritual Physician should apply the Lord Jesus too soon to the soul, to heal the souls Wounds, before the Corrosive of Terrour, and Fear, and Horrour, have had their proper effects upon the soul, it may be dangerous to the Destruction of the soul. Or thus, saith the soul, there may be nutritive nourishment to several Patients, that may be destructive to some sick Bodies, in regard there ought first to be some Purgations, before there be a futableness to the giving such Cordial Potions: Likewise if the pretious Cordials of Comfort that are in the Bosom of Jesus Christ, should be applied to the soul, before there hath been the bitter Pill of Terrour, of Sorrow and Anguish, and Horrour for his Sin given, they may be rather
L 4 destructive

destructive to the soul; So that this is very dangerous, saith the soul, to apply the Lord Jesus too soon. This Principle of Darkness hath commonly three Grounds, or three Foundations upon which it stands, and the soul conceives a three-fold Foundation is not easily shaken, and therefore conceiveth the Principle to be very firm.

I. It is built upon this ground, That all Divines generally have concluded that it is dangerous to apply Comfort to afflicted Consciences too soon, and that it is destructive to give Comfort before the soul be fitted for it. And indeed if we look over all those Famous men, as *Calvin, Greenham*, and that skilful Physician *Mr. Rogers, &c.* not one of a Thousand Ministers, but we may extract some such Passages as these from them, as, Take heed you apply not Comfort too soon after you be Wounded; Take heed you take not away the Corrosive and apply healing too soon: If you take away the Tent, saith one of them, before the corrupt matter be healed, it will heal of it self too soon, and break out most dangerously; Thus if the Tent of Fear and Horrour, and Soul-Affliction for Sin, be taken out of the Wound of the soul too soon, the soul take Comfort too soon, the Wound will be ready to heal too soon, and so will either break out more dangerously, or else it will be the everlasting death of the soul. But observe how souls mistake this ground, in conceiving these expressions, to be sufficient ground upon which to build such a Conclusion.

I. The meaning of these Divines in giving these cautions to take heed of applying Comfort too soon, is only this, that such as deal with Afflicted Consciences, must take heed they do not too readily assure them

them that the promise of Life in Jesus Christ belongs to them, and that they are certainly accepted in the Covenant of Grace: Now indeed these Comforts may be applied to the soul too soon; for this is not, nor ought to be, the first application of Jesus Christ to souls. The very first act in the soul, in its application of the Lord Jesus to it self, is not, that the Lord Christ is my Saviour, and that he hath Redeemed my soul, and Purchased Life and Eternal Salvation for me; Thus indeed a soul might apply Jesus Christ too soon: But the first application of Jesus Christ to the soul, is the applying the Lords Tender of the Lord Christ unto the particular soul; It is an assuring of the soul, from what it beholds in the Declaration of the Will of God from his Word, that it is his Will to receive his soul into union with Jesus Christ, and that it is the Will of God concerning him, that he do embrace Christ to be one with him.

2. Observe, That it is upon different grounds, that a soul doth receive assurance unto his Faith that he is united to Jesus Christ, and that other souls do manifest any Confidence that the soul is united to Jesus Christ. There is one ground for the souls own apprehension that the promise belongs to himself, and it is upon another ground that any soul may apply a promise, by way of assuring the soul that he hath an interest in the promise. This will appear in two things.

1. The ground from whence the soul receiveth assurance to his own Faith of his union with Christ, is invisible to all others when it is first visible to the soul it self. The Lord may and doth frequently by his own Spirit, so open the very secrets of his Heart and Mind

Mind unto a particular soul, and his willingness, his longing desire to accept him in Christ, as he doth beget yernings in the soul to Christ, and beget a blessed close between Christ and that soul; but alas! no other eye but his own seeth this blessed close.

2. Those grounds upon which any other may assure a soul, that he is united to Jesus Christ, are but the Consequence of the souls own Apprehension of Christs acceptance of it into union with him. So that observe, If the Spiritual Physician should apply Comfort in their sense to the soul, that is, assure the soul of his present interest in the Covenant of Grace; he may do it indeed too soon, because he can have no ground for such a Confidence that he is united to Jesus Christ, till he hath applied Jesus Christ in particular to his own soul, and that application hath brought forth some preceious Fruit, that is, till it hath brought forth Contrition, and Godly Sorrow, Emptiness, Nothingness, a sight of the souls own Sinking, Perishing condition, till it hath brought forth Gasping, and Longing, and Panting after Jesus Christ, no Spiritual Physician hath any ground to assure or tell the soul that he is Confident that he is united to Jesus Christ, and this is that that these Divines call Comfort: And therefore they propound three or four things as necessary to be discerned by every Spiritual Physician, before he apply Comfort to them.

First, say they, it is necessary that the Spiritual Physician behold the soul Wounded in the sense of his Sin: sensible of the Wrath and Indignation of God that is due unto his Sin, and sensible of the unavoidablebleness of Wrath and Indignation.

Secondly,

Secondly, say they, it is necessary the Spiritual Physician should discern in the afflicted soul, a Sincere, Cordial, Upright, Single Purpose and Intention, an absolute Resolution to abandon all those Sins, a purpose to Hate them, and Loath and Abhor them.

Thirdly, say they, that he must discern a sincere purpose, to be constant in a Universal way of Obedience unto Jesus Christ, to receive him as his only King, and Ruler, and Governour, to be obedient to his Will alone.

Fourthly, It is necessary that he discern earnest Longings, and Pantings, and Breathings after Jesus Christ, an unsatiable thirst after him, such a thirst as none can quench but Jesus Christ alone, such a thirst as makes him so prize Jesus Christ, that if all the World were turned into a Mountain of Gold, it were nothing to him in respect of Christ; and this thirst, say they, must be discerned by the Spiritual Physician to be only after the imputed Righteousness of Christ, that is, that he may be free from Sin, and have the Pardon pass'd from Heaven to his soul, and have the Righteousness of Christ to stand pure and clean, and Innocent before God, and then, say they, the Spiritual Physician may apply Comfort to the soul. So that it is apparent from their own Principles, what they mean by cautioning souls to take heed they do not apply Comfort to afflicted Consciences to soon. And yet further these Divines in their application of Comfort also acknowledge, it can be but in a conditional way, that any one can lawfully give to a soul, and assure it from the Word, that the promise of Life belongs to him, and that he is in the Covenant of Grace: For say they, it must be only

only upon this condition, that those things I named before be Truly, and Really, and Sincerely to be found in the soul. So that in effect there is no Comfort that is applyed by them unto the afflicted Conscience: And I must confess, I see not any safety that can be concluded from the Word of God, in application of Comfort in this way unto afflicted Consciences, in regard it must rather establish the soul upon a Humane Authority than a Divine.

II. A second ground of this Principle is this, That the promise of Life and Salvation doth not strait way belong to every soul that is Wounded, and Terrified and Afflicted in Conscience, but it is only to such as are truly afflicted, that is, such whose Hearts are truly Broken, and truly Contrite, *I/a.* 66. 2. Now herein are two mistakes to be observed.

1. That though it should be true, that the promises of Life and Salvation, are made only to such as were thus Broken and Contrite, (the contrary to which you have heard formerly opened) yet first the tender of the promise of the gift of Jesus Christ, is made to souls that have not the least degree of Contrition, nor the least degree of Sorrow. That is to say, the Lords Declaration of his Will, to receive every soul that will, into union with Jesus Christ, is as well propounded to souls not having the least degree of Contrition in their Hearts, as it is to those that are the most Contrite, and the most Broken.

2. If the promise of Life and Salvation were made only to those that were Contrite, yet that Contrition could proceed from nothing else, but the particular application of the Lord Jesus to himself.

self. All fulness is appointed by the Father to dwell in Christ, and whatever grace the soul receives, must be an Influence that flows down from the grace of Jesus Christ.

III. There is a third ground and that is this, That it is for the Glory and Honour of God, and for the advantage of the soul, that it should lie under affliction of Conscience, and under the Burden of his Sin some time, before he doth apply the Lord Jesus. Here I must Premise one thing, and that is, That the Glory and Honour of God, is the result of all his ways to his people. The Lord being the Fountain of Wisdom, cannot work without an end ; And his own self alone, that is, the manifestation of his own Glory, is the highest end ; Therefore of necessity, in all the ways of God, that end must be attended. This Premised I answer,

That properly and by it self, the souls lying under the Spirit of Bondage or affliction of Conscience for Sin, is neither for the Glory of God, nor for the souls advantage. It is ordinarily concluded that the soul lying under the Spirit of Bondage, doth make for the manifestation of the Glory of God.

1. In the Glory of his Justice to the Soul. Saith the soul, it makes much for the magnifying the Justice of God, in the eye and Heart, that the soul hath deserved, according to justice, to be plunged into the everlasting Pit of Wo, that he is liable to all the dreadful Torments, that the Wisdom of God can invent against such a cursed Rebel, for breaking such a Righteous and Holy Law : And it magnifies justice also in the eyes of others, when others shall see that those souls do acknowledge themselves, that they did expect nothing according to the strictness and rigor

of justice, but everlasting Wrath and Indignation.

2. That it doth make for the magnifying of God in his mercy. Say they, it makes mercy more sweet to the soul, and more highly to be prized by it, when the spirit of bondage hath lain upon the soul, and afflicted the conscience for a time. Now though at first view it should seem thus, yet properly the afflicting the soul for sin; that is, the spirit of bondage working fear and terrour for sin, doth not magnifie God neither in his justice nor mercy.

First, It doth not magnifie God in his justice properly. And that will appear, because the magnifying of the justice of God in the heart of any, is only by causing it clearly to apprehend his own infinite worthiness to lie under the wrath and indignation of God to all eternity. Now the soul is thus made apprehensive of his worthiness, to have the utmost justice of God executed upon him, only through receiving the Lord Jesus tendered. There are two things that must necessarily concur to make up this apprehension of his worthiness to have justice executed, in his utmost indignation upon him, and so consequently to make justice to be sanctified in any soul.

1. A spiritual discerning to behold the nature of sin. Now this must be received from Jesus Christ, and that by infusion of influences from Christ to the soul, by vertue of union between Christ and the soul. A spiritual object cannot be discerned in the spirituality of it but by a spiritual eye; Now both the justice of God and sin when looked upon aright, it must be by a spiritual eye that is futable to apprehend such an object.

2. There

2. There must be a discovery of the dimensions of sin, that is, the height, length, and breadth of it, before there can be a sanctifying the justice of God in the heart. Now the dimensions of sin are only discovered to the soul, through the application of the Lord Jesus tendered. Till the soul seeth the right object against whom sin is committed, he never seeth sin in the heinousness and abominable wickedness of it: Now the soul never apprehends God aright till he beholds him in Jesus Christ, as the object against whom he hath committed all his wickedness. So that the aggravations of a souls sin appearing only from the right apprehension of Jesus Christ, thence it appears it doth not make for the glory of the justice of God, that the soul should lie a time under affliction of conscience for sin, in regard the Justice of God is more exalted and magnified in the heart, in one moment, in the right application of the Lord Jesus, than it can be in twenty years, should the soul lie under the affliction of conscience all that time, not applying the Lord Jesus to himself. Neither can the justice of God be more magnified in the eyes of others, in case the spirit of bondage lieth upon it for a season before the tender of Jesus Christ, more than it can by the application of that tender immediately as soon as he is tendered. The justice of God is magnified before others, only by discovering before them his thoughts of himself, of his own unworthiness, and desert according to justice, to be everlastingly tumbling up and down in the gulf of wo and misery: Now the clearest apprehension of the unspeakableness of his own unworthiness, proceeds only from the tender of Jesus Christ to his soul.

Secondly,

Secondly, Hence also it necessarily follows, That the name of God is not properly magnified in his mercy in the soul that partaketh of it, by the spirit of bondage working upon the heart for a season, before the application of the Lord Jesus to the soul. The more clearly the soul apprehends its own wretched rebellion, and cursed treachery against the Crown of the Lords glory, the more clear is the Lords mercy manifested to the soul; Now this is made more apparent by the application of the Lord Jesus to himself, than it could be though the soul could discern the dreadfull everlasting burnings: Nay, if he could discern by a sense and feeling, the justice of God reaching of him; though he were in hell for a season, and should partake of the punishment of the Devils; that could only make him see the merit of sin, but it could not make him see himself worse than a Devil.

There is a Second branch of this ground, and that is for the souls advantage and benefit, that he does for a time lie under the heaviness and weight of his own iniquity, and not dare to apply the Lord Jesus. There are also two reasons rendred of that.

1. Say they, it doth drive the soul more vehemently to the Lord Jesus for justification, life, and salvation, and set the soul in a more hot pursuit after Jesus Christ, so as not to be satisfied without him.

2. Say they, it hath advantage for sanctification, in regard fear makes him depart from iniquity, and pursue more vehemently after holiness from Jesus Christ.

For answer to this, First, I must prewise thus much, That the Lord can, and doth improve every providence whatever, for the fulfilling of his own will in a soul; So that the Lords will being effectually to

draw a heart to the Lord Christ, to make him partake of holiness, and of union with himself; the Lord can, and it may be doth improve, the affliction of the souls conscience for sin for that end, to put him upon a violent pursuit after Jesus Christ: But I say this is only accidentally; But properly and by it self, the souls resting under affliction of conscience for his sin, before the applying the Lord Jesus to himself, doth not in any measure make for the benefit of the soul, in pressing the soul one step towards Jesus Christ, either for justification or sanctification, either for life, union with God in Christ, or holiness. And that will appear in two things.

1. In regard all apprehensions of God out of Christ, do but drive away the soul from the presence of God, and terrifie and amaze, and astonish and afright the poor soul. I mean thus, so long as the soul looks upon God, and doth not behold the Lord willing to accept his poor despicable soul, in that precious Mediator the Lord Jesus; the more it beholds the justice of God, and the more it feels of the effects of his justice in the conscience, the further the soul runs from God. No sooner had *Adam* transgressed the will of God, and had his conscience wounded, but he fled from the presence of God when God called him: Thus when *Judas* was sensible of his sin against God, presently he went and hanged himself.

2. In regard it is only through the infusion of the habit of grace into the soul, that the heart is any way drawn towards Jesus Christ. Saith Christ, *John 6. 44. No man can come unto me except the father draw him*: So the Spouse, *Cant. 1. 4. Draw me, we will run after thee*. The heart is altogether opposite to leave those cursed ways of enmity against Jesus
M Christ

Christ, after the longest time that ever any soul lay under the affliction of conscience for sin, till the Lord, by an infusion of a precious habitual disposition from Christ, inclines the soul to receive Jesus Christ tendered.

Now that this is a principle of darkness, we shall make it appear divets ways.

1. The similitude it self by which the soul illustrates this principle of darkness, is meerly impertinent, and improperly applyed to the souls case. The similitude you know was, that there must be corrosives applyed to the wound, to eat out the dead flesh, before a healing medicine be applyed. Now this is improperly applyed to the souls case, in regard there is no medicine to be applyed, neither corrosive, nor lenitive, but only the Lord Christ himself, for he is the only *balm of Gilead*. It is Jesus Christ alone by the power of his own death in the flesh that slew sin, and it is he only that hath power against sin and hell, *Pf. 68. 18. he led captivity captive*, That is, Sin, Death, and the Devil, that led poor souls captive. Now Jesus Christ being the only Medicine to heal Souls, I shall retort the Souls own Similitude against it self by way of contraries. You say there must be a corrosive applyed to the Soul before a lenitive; that is, before there be a healing medicine there must be some gnawing thing, some tent to ransake the wound: Now I say, Jesus Christ being the only medicine, the danger will be far greater in not applying the Lord Jesus presently, in regard there is no salve either corrosive or lenitive, that is applyed to the Soul where in Jesus Christ is neglected. If it be dangerous to the body to apply lenitives before corrosives, then how dangerous is it to leave the Soul without any medicine at all?

2. Jesus

2. Jesus Christ is the very powerfull corrosive. I is only he that must let the wound be ransaked to the bottom : I mean, he only doth give in light to see into the bottom of the wound ; It is only he that must eat out all the corrupt matter, unless you can think that sin can be killed without the application of the power of the death of Jesus Christ, and then indeed is Christ dead in vain.

3. It is impossible that any soul should too soon answer the call of God. Now observe, the Lord calls thy soul, whatever thou art, at this moment to apply Jesus Christ tendered. Saith God, Thou poor rebell and traytor to the Crown of Heaven, I command thee to receive the Lord Jesus ; It is my will thou shouldst receive Jesus Christ as a Mediator, to make up a union between thy self and me. Now dost thou canst answer too soon to this call ? You read of the five foolish Virgins, *Mat.* 25. That for want of being ready presently to hear and answer, when the Bridegroom should come, they were shut out, and could never enter into the Bridegrooms Chamber, to have Communion with Jesus Christ. You read also, *Mat.* 22. 7. That when the King invited the people to the Marriage of his Son (that is the Lord Jesus) because they neglected that call, the King was exceeding wrath.

4. A soul can never too soon come into a capability of doing any thing that may be acceptable to God. God calls for prayer at thy hand this night ; dost think it is too soon to be in a posture wherein thy prayer may be heard ? Is it too soon to come from under the hatred of God, to be in a state of amity and love ? It is more clear than the Sun at noon day, that it is a cursed principle of darkness, that

the soul should take heed that it doth not too soon apply to himself the Lord Jesus tendered.

But though this be a principle of darkness, yet by some Hell-bred Devilish Policy, the Devil can improve it both ways ; for though he cast in this principle to hinder souls from coming to Christ; yet on the contrary he perswades some in a confused, disorderly way, to apply, in some kind, the Lord Jesus too too soon. And therefore there are two or three things to be annexed to this principle of darkness.

1. Though the Lord Jesus cannot be applied to the soul too soon, yet it is dangerous and destructive to many souls, that they do believe their own salvation by Christ too soon. They do fancy to themselves, that though they be vile Sinners, yet the Lord Jesus is a Saviour, and they hope to be saved by Jesus Christ. This indeed is the common principle that the Devil useth as his grand snare wherein he catcheth many souls. Now there are two ways whereby souls may conceive dangerously, and destructively, their own salvation by Christ too soon.

1. When they conceive they shall certainly attain heaven and glory by Jesus Christ, without having an eye or respect to any other benefit by Christ. Now indeed doth the soul conceit his salvation by Christ too soon, when it neglects all the benefits that are propounded by Jesus Christ, and neglects the beholding the manner how Jesus Christ is propounded, and confusedly looketh unto the end alone, which is heaven and glory, and fancies to himself that he shall attain these by him. Though indeed the eye of the souls faith may be fixed upon one particular benefit that is propounded in Jesus Christ, in order of nature, be-

before his eye is fixed upon another benefit, and thereupon it is truly said, that Jesus Christ as he is a Saviour, and as he saves, is the primary object of faith; that is, the very first object of the first acting of the souls Faith; yet this is still but only in order of nature, and not in order of time. That is thus, the soul cannot rightly have his eye of faith upon one benefit to be attained by Jesus Christ, but he must have his eye upon all other benefits also propounded in Jesus Christ, that are futable to his poor needy soul.

2. A soul conceiteth his salvation by Christ too soon, when he conceives that he shall attain Heaven by Christ, without looking for any thing to be effected by Christ upon the soul, That's the reason why nothing can dash in sunder their confidence and hope, though their consciences tell them, their nature is the same, and their practice the same that ever it was. Yet you must conceive, it is only herein that this conceiting salvation by Christ is said to be too soon.

1. In that it is preposterous. It is a drawing Conclusion without Premises, that is without any thing to draw the conclusion upon. Then a soul conceiveth rightly, when he conceiveth first it is Gods will, that Jesus Christ should mediate between God and his soul, and take away all the cause of offence and displeasure; and then the soul concludes, therefore I must needs be saved by Jesus Christ.

2. If this conceit of the souls salvation by Christ, doth arise from the souls giving credit to any word of God, upon which he doth build this conceit, then it is only said to be too soon in regard of order, that is, in regard of order of nature, for indeed as for

order of time, this giving credit to such a word of God, as holds forth salvation to him by Christ, might and ought to have been at the same time, at the giving credit to the other word of God in revealing his union to be effected by the father through Christ.

2. Observe, That this conceiting their Salvation by Christ, is no application of Christ to their own Souls, tendered or offered as a Saviour by God. A Soul may conceit Salvation by Christ, and yet never receive him as a Saviour: And that will appear in two things.

1. God offers the Lord Jesus as a compleat Saviour. *Heb. 7. 25. He is able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him.* To the [uttermost] even unto perfection, that is, to save them exactly in all things, from all evils, and from all fears and dangers that can possibly accrue. Now he that conceiteth not that the Lord Jesus should save him from all kind of evils, guilt, and misery that his Soul is cast into; doth not conceit Jesus Christ to be his compleat Saviour, and so applies Christ too soon.

2. The Salvation that God renders by Jesus Christ, when he renders him as a Saviour, is two-fold.

First, From the guilt of sin. That is, the delivering and redeeming the Soul from his obligation unto punishment. Now this Salvation in Scripture is called reconciliation; which is the removing the displeasure of God, that should bind it over to everlasting punishment; and bring the Soul into a state of amity, and unity, and love to God. And this is the primary cause why Christ received his name, *Mat. 1. 21. His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.*

Second-

Secondly, God tenders by Christ to save Souls from the pollution of sin. So that the Soul that applies Christ rightly as a Saviour, applies him thus; He sees the Lord tenders the Lord Christ as one that hath triumphed over sin, and obtained a glorious conquest over Hell and Death; and then he seeth the Lord inviting his Soul to receive the Lord Jesus, that he might be partaker of the conquest; and thereupon his heart closes with the tender, and gives credit to it.

There is a Seventh Principle of Darknes, and that is this, That the Lord Christ must not be applied to the Soul too much in a way of comfort. *Principle of Darknes.* It is commonly received by many, that comfort is more dangerous for the Soul to meddle with, than lying under horror and terrour still. They commonly illustrate it by this similitude; say they, some drops of *Aqua-vita* may be exceeding helpful to a poor fainting spirit, it may revive a man in a swoon; but pouring in of much may overcome a man, and choak the natural vital heat, and so indangers a mans life: just thus, say they, it is with the Soul, when the heart is sinking and fainting, and prest down through fears of the anger and displeasure of God against him for sin, it may be good for the Soul to have some drops of the precious water flowing down from the bosom of Jesus Christ, but, say they, if you pour in too much, you may indanger the Souls life to eternity. This is another Hell-bred principle to prevent the Souls sight of Union with Christ. There are two grounds of this principle.

First, That the applying the Lord Jesus too much for comforting the Soul, may make the soul pre-

sumptuous. Thus they prove it. Say they, the applying the Law too much to the soul, and opening the terrible Wrath and Indignation of God too much, may make the soul despair: so on the contrary, the opening and applying the glorious Priviledges of Jesus Christ for the comforting the soul too much, may put it upon a desperate Rock of Presumption.

Secondly, a second ground is this, that the applying the Lord Jesus for the comforting of the soul too much, will too soon dry up the Penitent Tears, it will soon seal up the Springs of Sorrow and Mourning that were broken up in the soul. Now for the clearing of this to be a Principle of Darkness, there is first something to be premised.

First, that the soul understand what is meant by comfort.

Secondly, What is meant by applying comfort to the soul. By comfort is meant only that strength, and that Life and Refreshment that a soul receiveth from the apprehension of the good of any object. And to apply the Lord Jesus for comforting the soul, is to receive the Lord Jesus with all his Glorious Priviledges that are suitable for the Poor, Needy, Despicable, Loveless soul, according as God the Father renders him to the soul. To speak more plainly, to receive the Lord Jesus as he is offered freely to be given by God to the Poor Despicable soul, to make up a League, and Amity and Love between the Father and the soul, to break in sunder those Chains wherewith the soul was clogged by Sin to everlasting Destruction, and in a word, for the perfecting of the souls Happiness, both here and for Eternity.

Now

Now I shall answer directly to that first Foundation, upon which this first Principle of Darkness is built. And I say it is impossible that the applying of the Lord Jesus for the comforting of the soul, should make the soul in danger to miscarry through Presumption, but rather the contrary, it is the greatest preservative against Presumption. And that will appear in three or four particulars.

I. In regard the more the comforts of the soul are enlarged through the application of Christ, the more clear is that cursed Root of Self-Confidence, rooted out of the Heart. The Comforts of Jesus Christs, in their own nature, do empty the soul of it self and all Self-Confidence, in regard it removes the soul from all imaginary dependance upon its self, either for Comfort here, or for Mercy and Happiness to Eternity. The souls perfect nothingness in it self, is only by beholding the Lord Jesus as the Father hath given him to the soul: Therefore it is said in 1 John. 3. 2, 3. *We know not yet what we shall be, but then we shall be like him, for we shall know him as he is*: And Eph. 3. 19. *The Apostle prays that they may comprehend with all Saints, what is the Height, and Breadth, and Length, and Depth of the Love of God, which passeth knowledge*: That is, to know this of their own souls; And what is the end of all? That they may be filled with the fulness of God. This fulness of God can be wrought by nothing, but by the full comprehension of Jesus Christ, and all his Comforts.

II. In regard it raiseth the souls thoughts of Jesus Christ in a transcendent manner, and fills the Heart with a high estimation of him. When the soul applies most incomprehensively the Lord Jesus in all his Priviledges

Priviledges, for the refreshing of his soul, then doth the soul see most largely into the incomprehensive Gulf of the excellency of Jesus Christ; and when the soul seeth Jesus Christ most clearly, as altogether incomprehensible, then is the Heart filled with the highest thoughts that can be of Jesus Christ.

II. The application of the Lord Jesus for the comforting of the soul in the largest manner that can be, doth beget a more precious fear in the heart, than all the Terrours, Sights, and Visions of the Indignation of God against the soul for Sin can possibly beget. All the Reason that can be given, why it should endanger the soul to Presume, is only this, that the applying Christ in two large a measure in his comforts, should make the soul without fear: Now the soul is never so filled with Holy Fear, as when it hath the largest comprehension of Jesus Christ; The Reason is plain, The larger comprehension the soul hath of Jesus Christ, the more natural is the love to Jesus Christ. Now love is extended upon Jesus Christ, when it rests upon him, or fetcheth in Joy through believing: And according as love is extended, so is fear extended; Love and Fear go hand in hand, you cannot divide them; a man of large love is a man of large fear, The reason is plain, The more dear any object is to the soul, the more a man feareth to lose it.

III. When the Lord Christ is applied most for Comfort, then doth a Holy Jealousie rise high in the heart. When Love rises high, Jealousie rises high: Jealousie is compounded of Love and Anger, or Love and Hatred. Where Love runs out largely in Zeal, there is a Zeal of Hatred against all that should deprive us of it. Put a Fearful man and a Jealous man together

together, to Watch over a Beloved object, and you need not fear their Sleeping; Thus Fear and Jealousie meeting together in the soul, will make it Watchful least there should be the least outgoing of the Heart from Jesus Christ.

Secondly, Neither can it dry up the Repenting or Penitent Tears too soon. It is as impossible that the Springs of Godly Sorrow should be sealed up, by the application of the Lord Jesus in the largest measure for the comforting of the soul, as it is impossible it should make the soul Presume. The Foundation of this Principle of Darkness is laid upon a two-fold mistake.

First, that the discerning eye of the soul, whereby Sin should be discerned, should be closed up with the sight of the apprehension of large comfort from Jesus Christ.

Secondly, that the sight or apprehension of a defect of comfort in the Lord Jesus for his soul for the present, should be the Original of true Godly Sorrow, and so that Godly Sorrow should Perish, when the comforts of the Lord Jesus, suitable to his needy soul, appear. Now it is apparent that the eye of the soul whereby he may see his own Wretchedness, Merit, and Desert, is more clear by the sight of enlarged comfort from Jesus Christ.

I. The eye of the soul receiveth more Divine light to discover Sin in the nature of it, by how much in a greater degree the soul apprehends enlarged comforts, through the application of the Lord Jesus. This is that precious eye-salve spoken of, *Rev. 3.* that Christ inviteth souls to come and buy of him. That's the reason *Mary* wept so much, and washed the feet of Jesus Christ with her tears; Christ tells you,

you, it was because she loved much; And what was the cause of that love, but only the apprehension of the glorious priviledges to her in Jesus Christ?

Godly
sight of

2. The apprehension of a defect of comfort in the Lord Christ, suitable to the Soul for the present, cannot be a spring or head from whence the stream of Godly sorrow flows. Godly sorrow must arise from the clearest, most spiritual sin: Now you see, the clearest discerning of sin in a Spiritual manner, doth arise from the clear discerning of those enlarged comforts, through the application of the Lord Jesus; And indeed as those increase, so doth Godly sorrow increase; The greatest comforted Soul, is the greatest mourning Soul. Now you see the foundation is too weak to bear up this principle, and also that it will appear to be a principle of darkness. There can be but two senses in which this proposition can be taken.

First, It must either be meant thus; That the Lord Christ must not be applyed for comforting of Souls too much; that is, not applyed to comfort the Soul in his necessity with too great a confidence. Now there it crosses the precious heavenly light that shines from the Sun of righteousness, the Lord Christ, in regard it is the great command that the Soul ought to receive him whole, with all his priviledges propounded to the Soul, with a full assurance of faith: And so Abrahams faith is commended, that he did not doubt at all, *Rom. 4. 18, 19, 20.*

Or, Secondly, the application of the Lord Christ for comforting the Soul too much, must be meant thus, That he may be applyed too confidently to the Soul, with too large a comprehension of the infinite riches of all excellencies that are treasured up for the

the Soul in the Lord Jesus. Now to apply the Lord Jesus for comfort too much this way, doth also directly oppose the Scripture.

1. It is commonly the frequent prayer of the Apostle for the Saints, that they might have the fullest comprehension of Jesus Christ to their Souls, *Eph. 1. 17, 18.* He prays that their *understandings may be enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of his calling: that is, that they might know the glorious things that they are called to, in Jesus Christ.* So *Eph. 3. 18.* He would have them *know the exceeding riches of his grace to them that believe.* He would have them comprehend the dimensions of the love of Christ to them.

2. It is the desire of Jesus Christ, that all his people might have fulness of joy, *John 15. 11.* *These things have I spoken unto you, that your joy might be full.* That's also the Apostles prayer, *Rom. 15. 13.* *The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

3. It is according to the degree wherein the Soul comprehends the excellency treasured up in Jesus Christ for his Soul, that it partaketh of the excellency of Christ, and is changed into ~~the~~ the likeness of Christ, *1 John 3. 2.* So that it is a principle of darkness, that clearly contradicts the word of truth, to say, the Soul must not apply the Lord Jesus too much, that is, with too large a comprehension of the priviledges of Jesus Christ to his Soul.

But there are two things to be opened about this, for the clearing of it.

1. Though Jesus Christ cannot be applied for comforting the Soul too much, be the Soul in what condition

dition it can be, yet the Lord Christ may be looked ~~upon into~~ for comforting a Soul too much: That is, when Souls look upon Jesus Christ for comfort without receiving him as he is tendered by God to the Soul. Though Christ be the object of all true comfort to the Soul, yet it is Christ as he is in Union with the Soul; for it is not the goodness of an object, simply and absolutely considered, that doth send down strength and life into the heart in beholding of it, but it is the goodness of an object appropriated to its self.

2. Jesus Christ may be applied by others, for comforting their Souls too much. I mean, to affirm to any particular Soul, that the Lord Jesus with his glorious priviledges is his; this is applying Jesus Christ for comforting them too much; the reason is plain, in regard it is out of Gods way. Though these two Cautions are to be observed, yet it is a principle of darkness that is necessary to be removed, before there can be a certain evidence of the Souls Union with Christ.

There is one Principle of darkness more, and that is this, That a Soul must discern his peculiar right to, and interest in the particular promise, before he believe it is the will of God to receive his particular Soul into Union with Christ. The meaning of the Soul is this, that he must behold some promise pass'd over to him by Jesus Christ, before he can believe it is the will of God to receive him into Union with Christ. This principle being so cunningly forged in Hell, that it is scarce discerned from a principle of light, we shall endeavour to help you to discern it to be a principle of darkness. I find three foundations upon which this principle is built.

*Principle of
Darkness.*

1. That

1. That it cannot possibly be lawfull for every Soul to believe, that it is the will of God to take him into union with Christ. For saith the Soul, then the greatest part of the world should be put upon it to believe a lie.

2. That it must be through a Souls right to some promise, that he cometh to have a right to Jesus Christ. Now this is a false foundation, because there can be no interest, nor right the Soul can have to one promise of God, before the Soul is bound to believe that the Lord will receive his soul into Union with Christ.

1. In regard the first promise is Jesus Christ himself, and the very primary object of faith is Jesus Christ himself. This you shall observe, *Gen. 3. 15.* The first promise that was given to *Adam* was, *that the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head*, which is nothing but a promise of Jesus Christ.

2. When the promise was first renewed to *Abraham*, it was in these words; *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*: What is that seed? It is Jesus Christ, *Gal. 3. 16.* So the Apostles in their preaching laid Jesus Christ as the first object of faith, Believe in the Lord Jesus.

3. A third foundation of this principle is this, That only those promises that are made unto holy qualities in sanctified Souls, are assuring promises, or promises that can assure unto a Souls faith, that the Lord will receive him into union with Christ. Saith the Soul, there are inviting promises and assuring promises; now inviting promises speak so general, as none can discern his union from thence; but the promises to the graces they in a manner particularize Souls: Now hence the Soul concludeth thus, it must of necessity be a necessary precedent before a
Souls

Souls assurance that God will take him into union with Christ, that he see some holy quality in his own spirit, to which the Lord hath made some such promise, Now observe the gross darkness and blindness, in conceiving inviting promises not to be able to give assurance to a Souls faith, of union with Christ. It will appear in two or three things.

1. Then the Soul must conceive, that those promises that the Lord propounds, in the inviting of the Soul to Christ, may not be believed with a fulness of confidence and assurance. Now

1. Thence the Soul must conceive, that some portions of the word of God, have not sufficient authority to be believed undoubtedly by the Soul. Now what an high indignity is offered to God, in entertaining such a thought, that any one *iota* or *Tittle* from the great God should not be able to command a fulness of belief from every soul ?

2. The Soul maketh all these inviting promises to be merely in vain. For if these inviting promises do not sufficiently reveal the Lords will, to receive a poor loveless Soul, that hath been at enmity, to union with the Lord Jesus, so as to make the Soul believe it with firmness of confidence, then they are altogether useless, they can be no incentive and motive to invite the Soul to Jesus Christ.

2. The Soul must say thus, That those inviting promises may not lawfully be applyed particularly unto particular Souls with that fulness of confidence. Now herein is great injury done to the truth, as will appear in two things.

1. The Soul must deny those portions of the word to be believed by any one Soul under heaven. Now herein the Soul shews much impudence and boldness,

to set limits to the will of God, where he is pleased to set no limits.

2. Then those inviting promises should not be the object of justifying faith, according as it doth justify. For questionless that which is called justifying faith, (according as it doth justify, or in the exercise of it in that justifying way) that doth particularly apply those promises to the particular Soul.

3. There is one imagination more of the Soul upon which it grounds this conceit, that the inviting promises of God, are no grounds of assuring the Soul of union with Christ, and that is this, That a Soul may with a fulness of assurance, believe the Lords will to be, to receive his particular Soul into Union with Jesus Christ, and yet the Soul at the same time be doubtfull and questioning of his Union. All that is possible for the Soul to say in this, is only thus much, that a Soul may believe with all fulness of assurance, the Lords will to take the Soul into Union with Christ habitually, though not actually, and so be questioning his Union with Christ, though he do believe it habitually. But alas this comes nothing to the purpose, for indeed though it may be said truly, that a Soul hath the habit of faith, to believe it is the will of God to take Souls into union with Christ, yet a Soul cannot be said properly habitually to believe this, for indeed the weakest believers, that have the lowest degree of faith, have the act of faith from whence this habit of faith proceeds, and so he doth in some degree believe the Lords will to receive his Soul into union with Jesus Christ in the promises. Thus I have done with the first kind of beams the Devil forges to cast into the Souls eye.

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There is a second kind of Beams of Darknes, and those are Dark Distempers. Though the Devils grand policy be to keep false principles in the souls judgment, whereby the soul may discern all in a false way that God propounds to him, yet he hath another policy to flee to, and that is Distempers in the Heart. Now these are also dangerous, and keep the soul from assurance of union with Christ, while those remain in the soul. Therefore that is a second work of the spirit to pluck out those dark distempers: And these are also divers.

The first Dark Distemper is Spiritual Pride. It is Natural Pride working Spiritually, though sometimes it is Spiritual Pride: And that is a kind of humor, or swelling in the Spirit; Or it is a kind of lifting up the spirit in a crossness, and averness to the will of God. This the Devil causeth to grow like a wen upon the souls spiritual eye, whereby he prevents the souls seeing what the promise holds forth to him. There are two special workings of this distemper, whereby the soul is prevented from discerning what the promise holds forth.

1. It inclineth the soul to have his thoughts taken up chiefly in looking after, and seeking out some excellency and goodness in the soul it self, whereupon it might stay its soul, and uphold its sinking spirit. And hence you shall observe (though the heart little mind it, and think it self far enough off from pride) the souls eye is always upon his own prayers, and duties of worship, upon his own tears, mourning and groaning, upon the desires of his own heart, and its workings toward God, upon his own hungering and thirsting after God; And all the soul complains of under

under this distemper is commonly (that which a soul would little think proceeds from pride) that he cannot find any goodness in himself: Whereas if the truth be found out, and the heart searched to the bottom, he thinketh he hath much goodness.

2. It maketh the heart averse to the thoughts of receiving all that ever he shall have, only through meer gift alone. The proud heart will not be beholding to God in Christ for all, but would have all in his own way. Hence ariseth a three-fold distemper.

1. The soul insnarles it self in the interpretation of the promises, and interprets all the promises against it self. Thence the souls thinks concerning every promise, it is but given to aggravate my condemnation.

2. Hence ariseth a conclusion in the soul that it must not, nay sometimes that it will not receive the Lord Jesus, till it find such and such dispositions, as the soul conceives necessary to be in it self. Saith the soul, if I could find my heart enlarged towards God, and my deadness and coldness removed, if I could find a mighty fervency of the spirit of prayer in my heart, I could think indeed that the promise of the Lord Jesus might belong to me: So that here the soul sits waiting for, and pursuing after something that he might bring with him to the Lord Christ, that he might come with his penny, to take his pennyworth of that which God propounds in Jesus Christ.

3. From this averfness to receive all from free grace, ariseth a neglect and disregard, of searching into the promises what they hold forth. Propound the promises to the soul, alas, saith the soul, what is this to me, none of these promises belong to me? Now thence the soul is kept in his dolefull blindness

and darkness, through want of gazing upon the promise, and looking upon the beam of light it holds forth.

A second Distemper is the rashness and unadvisedness of the soul. This rashness is

Dark Distemper.

an unadvised sudden drawing up determinations concerning the souls condition, without a due examination of the ground from whence the soul draws that determination, and without a due weighing of those conclusions drawn from thence in the ballance of the Sanctuary. Questionless this is none of the least distempers, nor none of the least beams that the Devil keeps in the souls eye: It is one of the most secret dangerous snares, that the Devil catches the feet of souls in, to put them upon looking on the things of God out of a rational way. I know no greater difference between true faith, and the hypocrites temporary faith, the one believes in a rational way by his judgment, when the other have confused motions towards God without judgment. Now for the further clearing of this distemper of spirit,

1. Saith the soul (through this rash distemper prevailing in his heart) those to whom the promises of God are intended to be made good, God draws them to embrace them, but I do not find that God draws me, or giveth me power, therefore I am none to whom this promise is made. The principle is true, but the conclusion is drawn rashly from it.

1. The soul commonly draws this conclusion without weighing what the drawings of God are, and what the secret power infused into the soul, to receive those promises tendered to it, is. I have heard a soul draw this conclusion from this principle, but
when

when asked what are the drawings of God in the soul, to inable it to embrace Jesus Christ tendered in the promise, the soul knows not: Ask it, didst ever find the Lord making thy heart willing to receive the Lord Jesus to be one with thy soul, and to make up an union with the father for thee? O yes, saith the soul, I confels my soul longs for that, I cannot but say I am willing: And yet in the mean time, through the distemper of rashness, draws this conclusion that he is none of the number of those to whom the promise is made, because God does not draw him.

2. Suppose there was not this willingness, yet the conclusion is rashly drawn from the principle, in regard there is no time that God hath limited, or prescribed to himself, wherein he will draw the hearts of those that he intends the promises for.

3. The souls ground is false, in regard the Scripture determines not, that the Lord always acts those inward habitual drawings of his, when he hath once actually drawn.

2. Say some souls, through this rash distemper, that those God intends good to, he will not suffer them to grow worse and worse under the means, and to decay in their affections and grow more corrupt: But saith the soul, I grow worse and worse under the means, more corrupt, and my affections decay, and therefore I am afraid the Lord never intends to do good to me. Now I pray observe but thine own rashness, in not weighing and trying and searching all things, to search whether indeed thou beest grown worse and worse under the means or no; and to see in what degree thou art grown more corrupt, and whether it be such a degree as the Scripture evidenceth, God lets not those that he intends good to in

Christ to fall into ~~sin~~ or no. Here should have been a great many things weighed, before thou hadst drawn that conclusion.

1. Thou shouldest have weighed, whether thine heart be grown more corrupt or no. Divers things things are considerable there.

1. Though thou judgest thy self more corrupt, yet thou mayst not truly have more corruption than thou hadst: A soul is to distinguish between corruptions that are effectively so, and those that are formally so: It may be thou mayst see corruptions formally in thy soul more than before, whereas thou mayst not be more corrupt effectively: I mean thus, thou mayst find more motions unto sin and wickedness than before, and yet not those motions prevail to sin effectively, that is, to deprave and corrupt thy soul. Though indeed interpretatively, and according to the strict law of God, those stirrings of corruption may be called sin, yet they cannot properly be called corruption, and thou canst not be said to be more and more corrupt; for then they grow corruptions, when the heart is inclined to them.

2. Thou mayst judge thy self to have more corruption, and yet there may not be more corruption neither.

First, God may have cast more light into thy soul than before, when thou didst judge thy self not to be so full of corruption. Now through light every iniquity hath a greater weight upon the spirit than it had formerly: Now the more weight it hath upon the spirit, the more it is taken notice of. And through more light there is a clearer discovery of the duty that the Lord requireth of the soul, and of the nature and spirituality of the duty: Now the more

exquisitely the soul discerns the duty God requireth at his hand, the more abominable he seeth his own heart.

Secondly, if there be not more light, it may be there is a greater tenderness of spirit infused into thee than formerly. So that thou seekest corruptions more, because the burden of them is more spiritually upon thy heart than before, and so they appear to be the greater to thee.

3. Corruptions may appear more, when they are not more, in regard there may be many occasions offered to draw forth inherent corruption into exercise. There might be as many legions of iniquity in thy heart formerly, though they did not appear, because they had not the same occasion.

4. Satan may be suffered by God to endeavour to draw out corruption, for the discovery of corruption, and the mortifying of it. The Lord may suffer Satan (contrary to his intentions) to war against his own kingdom in thy heart, in drawing out all his power to stir thy corruptions, that thou mayst go to heaven for power to slay them. So that if all these things were well considered, it may be, the heart would not be found to be more corrupt.

II. Suppose the heart should be grown more corrupt under means for a season. Suppose the root of sin should get some sap, and bud and sprout again, and send forth its branches more plentifully, and bring forth more fruit; yet it were to be weighed before a soul draws such a conclusion, whether sin may not revive again, and grow more lively for a time even in those who are near to the heart of God, to whom God intends all the good in the promises rendered by Christ.

III. It would be also considered, whether the Scripture warrants the drawing such a conclusion, from a real sense of growing worse and worse. It would be considered, whether the Lord be not tendered to ^{the} at that time, that thou mightest receive such influences of grace from him, as might prevent thy soul from still growing worse and worse.

IV. It would be considered, whether the soul can find that such a degree of declension, as it is now fallen into, be such a one as the Lord Christ hath excluded all that fall into it, from receiving himself in the Covenant of Free Grace, If I should follow up this rashness of the soul further, I might open that the souls real declension in affections that were formerly, may not be a sufficient ground to conclude that the soul is grown worse and worse.

1. It would be considered, whether affections did work in the Lords own orderly way, through the following of the judgment, in closing with the truth propounded in Christ. It may be the novelty of the truths affected thy heart, as being new things, and it was not from the dictate of thy judgment, declaring the excellency of Jesus Christ tendered, that thy affections did work so powerfully.

2. It would be considered, whether the Lord may not, and doth not more frequently, stir up higher affections in souls in the first holding forth of the Gospel to them, than he always intends afterwards to them. Do you think that the Prodigal (*Luke 15. 44.*) had always those expressions of his fathers delight in his return, that he had when he first returned? Then there must be the best robe put upon him, and a feast, and musick: But it is a question, whether his father put him on such apparel every day, and

and make him a feast every day? So the Lord may, and I believe doth, at the first revealing of his truth, give more affections than he intends to continue, and more stirrings of grace infused than he intends afterwards constantly to continue: yet though there remain not the same activity, vivacity, liveliness of affection, yet there may be the same affection remain; nay, it may be the affection may be grown in its fixedness, and steadiness, and in its orderly way of working towards Jesus Christ, though it appear not working so powerfully and mightily as it did before. You see plainly the conclusion is rashly drawn, though from a true principle considered in some sense.

A third Distemper is fearfulness, the timorous disposition of the soul. Now you must rightly understand this distemper, for though the Devil cast in the distemper of fearfulness into some souls to keep them from union with Christ, yet he casts in the distemper of presumption into more souls, to prevent them from seeing the face of God in the glass of the Gospel, and so leads their souls into the pit of darkness. We shall clear it in two or three conclusions.

Dark Distemper.

1. There cannot be too much holy fear possessing any heart. That is, there cannot be too much awfull reverence of the holy Majesty of God, nor too much awfull respect of God, as he presents himself cloathed with the precious robe of mercy & loving kindness & goodness. This fear God requires, *Pf. 130. 4. There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared.*

2. There is a fear which is a terrour and dread and horror of the avenging justice of the Almighty God. There is a fear of displeasing this God appearing in this manner, least his anger should be so kindled

kindled, that flames of indignation should proceed from him, to the consuming of soul and body for ever. And it is this fear that is too much in the souls of Gods dear ones. This kind of fear is but a *Judas* his fear, and a *Cain's* fear, and a *Saul's* fear.

3. There is a natural affection of fear that possesseth the hearts of men and women, as men and women. That's this, a perturbation, or a troubling, or perplexing, or causing the heart to suffer, through the motions of the blood and animal spirits to and fro, upon the souls apprehending some evil that he is in danger to suffer. This kind of fear is not an evil fear absolutely considered: But this fear becomes a finfull distemper through the inordinateness of it. As,

1. When it exceeds the bounds of reason. That is, when the heart is perplexed with some evil he shall suffer, and can give no ground of this fear: The soul is afraid of the loss of heaven, and the glorious privileges tendered in Christ, and can render no good account according to reason, why his soul is thus afraid.

2. When it exceeds the bounds of Grace. That is, when it exceeds the bounds God hath appointed in his word, when it proves a distracting fear, and unfits the soul for the duty God requires at his hand. And this distemper arises from three principles, and accordingly produces three effects, whereby the soul is prevented from discerning the light the promise holds forth.

1. Commonly it arises from the sense of the souls own guiltiness. The sense of a soul to be a guilty person, naturally stirs up fear of punishment, according to the disposition of men as men; and working with natural conscience it stirs up fear of divine

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vengeance hereafter, and so by this means that sinful fear prevails and clouds the soul.

2. It ariseth from the souls apprehension of the height of the consequence, of the souls right establishment. Fear is begotten by looking upon the danger: It is like a man standing upon a high Tower, and looking upon the downfall, though he stands firm, it pales the man, and makes him afraid: So they standing upon the Tower of Eternity come to be sensible of the great danger, and thence arises this fear of heart.

3. This fear ariseth from the darkness and ignorance wherein the soul remains. I mean his ignorance of the way of the right establishment of the soul, his ignorance of the nature and large extent of those promises that God vouchsafes to his soul: Like a blind man that is in continual fear lest he meet with danger, and stumble and fall. Walking in darkness strikes a fear naturally in any person, much more doth this spiritual darkness produce fear in the soul. Now this darkness thus risen hath three effects to prevent the soul from the sight of the promise held forth.

1. It causeth the soul to create strange unheard of dangers to himself, through the strength of imagination working by fear. The very strength of fancy, when this distemper of fear prevails, causeth the soul to make new dangers to it self every moment, and to fear where no fear is: And thence he multiplies one objection upon another, and the answering of one objection is but the bringing in of another objection.

2. This distemper of fearfulness, doth prevent the souls right use of the appointed means for the
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Prevention of real danger discovered. The soul thinking to escape presumption, by receiving Jesus Christ, lest it have no right to him, prevents it self of the use of the right means to come to Christ, it makes the soul mindless of what the promise holds forth.

3. This distemper darkens the reason of the soul, and clouds the precious divine light that God hath infused into it. It looks upon God in Christ through the dark glass of fear, and so is driven from God in Christ, rather then drawn to a close with fuller confidence. Now there are two things the spirit of God is to do for the removing of this distemper.

1. The Spirit of God presents the Lord in his love, compassions, and tender nature, cloathed with the nature of loving-kindness, and thereupon begins to allay that passion of fear, to prevent the rage and dominion of it. The spirit presents the Lord as it were, coming down with a still gentle voice, speaking to the soul in a precious alluring, soul-conquering, heart-inamouring way, and thereby the heart begins to have dispositions begotten in it to close with God, to draw near to God, whereas it stood before as far off as frightened and astonished.

2. The spirit useth to expostulate with the poor trembling soul, about the cause of his fear and distemper of heart. The spirit cometh and expostulateth with the soul, why art thou so afraid thou trembling soul? why dost stand shaking like a leaf in the forest shaken with the wind? why is thy heart so perplexed? Saith the spirit, Christ will receive thee if thou beest willing to receive him. Then it may be, the passion of fear is allayed, and the soul brought to close with the tender of love in Jesus Christ, and the soul is brought to a holy fear and trembling,
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laying his mouth in the dust before God, thinking himself worthy to go into the pit of wo for ever, yet yielding to receive what the Lord propounds in Christ.

A fourth Distemper is *Over much Jealousie, Jealousie of God, and Jealousie of his own heart.* The soul is exceeding prone out of measure, to a strange unheard of Jealousie of God, to have evil surmisings of God. Look to some prophane ones,

1. They have such evil surmisings, as they suspect God in his being, *Psal. 14. 1. The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.*

2. A Second sort surmise that God regards not the commission of sin so as others would perswade them. Like those *Psal. 50, 21.* that think the Lord to be such a one as themselves, they think there need be no such strictness to go to heaven as others would make toem believe: That's the meaning of that, thou thoughtest I was such a one as thy self: thou thoughtest I would admit thee into heaven, notwithstanding all the transgressions thou livest in.

3. Others surmise, that God is a hard master, one that puts heavy yokes upon the neck of his people that they cannot be able to bear. They think it a heavy yoke that they can take none of their cursed pleasures and delights, and therefore they had as good be out of the world, should they come to that near closing and joyning with God in Christ; to be one with him.

4. A Fourth sort surmise that God will accept of them, though they go on in the way of iniquity, if they repent at last.

5. A Fifth sort are the formal civil ones, who think God will be satisfied if they pay every man his own, and do none any wrong, and perform the duties of Gods worship he requireth at their hands.

6. A Sixth sort are those that are detained from God by a distemper of unbelief. Unbelief cannot think that the love of God should be extended to the worst of sinners: Nay saith the soul, the word of God hath declared the contrary; All shall not be the objects of the loving-kindness of God in Christ, therefore those expressions of his love belongs not to me, saith the Soul. Now there are two ways how this distemper comes thus to prevail, and there are two or three sad effects it hath in the heart.

1. This distemper proceeds from another distemper even as bad, and that is from a sensual Judgment maintained in the Soul. The glorious things of the Gospel being inevident unto the eye of sense, yea to the eye of reason, being things the eye of man, as man, never saw; nor the ear of man, as man, never heard; nor the heart of man, as man, never conceived: a man must needs pass a false Judgment upon them, when he Judgeth by a sensual Judgment, and say with *Nicodemus*, how can these things be? what to have such iniquities and rebellions cast by into the bottom of the Sea, and never remembred any more; To have my polluted Soul looked upon as righteous as an Angel it self, by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, how can it be? Now by judging the glorious Mysteries of the Gospel thus, by a sensual judgment, the soul cometh to be jealous and suspicious of God, that it cannot be, that God intends such love towards his soul, as he manifests in his expressions.

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2. This Jealousie ariseth from the souls measuring Gods way by its own way. According to this principle, the soul thinks, if any man should offer such injury to me, as I have done to God, I might profess love, but I could never forget him; Therefore he concludes, the Lord can never forget those injuries his soul hath offered to him. But God tells us, *Isa. 55. 7 His ways are above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts*: As if he should say, do not conceive, because it is impossible for man to pardon so abundantly, that therefore I will not. Now in judging Gods ways according to our ways, this jealousie prevails, and doth produce these sad effects in the heart, that prevent the souls discerning its union with Christ in the promise.

1. By this Distemper there are groundless conclusions drawn up by the soul against it self. The soul once entertaining jealous thoughts of God, seldom stays there, but jealousie like a Canker eats off more and more the good thoughts it should have of God, till at last it draws full conclusions, that the Lord hath no good thoughts at all towards it. The soul commonly proceeds from care to fear, from fear to jealousie, and from jealous suspicions to hard conclusions.

2. This distemper causeth an evil eye in the soul. I mean this, he draws an evil conclusion from all Gods works: Let God vouchsafe precious revelations of the mystery of his will, through the Gospel of Jesus Christ to him, while the heart remains under this distemper, What says the heart? I am afraid it is, but to harden me, I am afraid it is to increase my condemnation. Let God take away his ordinances again, and there is as ill a construction made of that;
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the soul under that jealousie presently concludeth, if the Lord intended any good to his soul, he would let him use the means, but saith the soul, I have abused the means, and now am deprived of it, and therefore now I fear there is no hope. Again, if you look upon the Lords dealing with the soul outwardly, if the Lord lay affliction upon him, now I may see indeed, saith he, that the Lord is angry, the Lords indignation is kindled against me for my sin, and I know not but it may be a beginning of my everlasting torments, and the soul never searcheth whether it may ^{be} out of faithfulness, that the Lord comes thus to chastise outwardly, according to that in Ps. 119. 95. Or let the Lord vouchsafe prosperity outwardly to such a soul, ten to one as sad constructions are made of such dealings of God too.

3. It causeth the soul to rely upon sight and sense alone, in its searching and seeking for the manifestation of his union with Jesus Christ. The jealous heart will trust God no further than he sees him: So that hereby the soul remaineth under an impossibility of attaining any assurance to his faith of his union with Christ, in regard by this the soul doth even renounce the use of faith. Now the spirit seeks to remove this distemper, and to bring the heart into a sweet confidence of God, and to crediting what God propounds, by these means.

1. The spirits represents the expressions of the Lords love to the soul, in the latitude and fulness of them. It makes it appear to be so full, so compleat and perfect a love, as there is not the least imaginable cause of jealousie: And surely this is the very intention of the Spirit of God, in so often heaping up expressions upon expressions, in setting out the
love

love of God in Christ : the Spirit of God doth even rise to the highest kind of expressions that is possible in this way for this end, seldom names the grace of God, (that is to say the love of God) but he calls it riches of grace, nay abundant riches, and the exceeding riches of his grace.

2. The Spirit in this case reveals the Lords strong confirmation of all those expressions of his love. The Spirit reveals how the Lord hath bound himself to the performance of all those expressions of love, in the latitude and fulness of them, to every *Iota* and point, to the least tittle.

1. The Spirit reveals the Lords promise of faithfulness, in the expression of his love. Then in *Hos. 2.*

19. God tells the Church, *I will betroth thee unto my self, in righteousness and judgment, and in loving kindness and in mercies.*

2. The Spirit reveals the Lords confirmation of it by his own hand writing. All the Scriptures are given as the hand writing of himself, only for the manifestation of the sincerity, and integrity of the heart of God in the love he intends to Souls : The very end of writing all the Scriptures is primarily to draw Souls to believe, and secondarily, to believe gradually more and more to perfection, till they come to this full assurance of Faith. The whole Scriptures of the ~~Lord~~ and New Testament, are but one blessed letter of love, sent from heaven by God, written by the blessed Secretary of heaven, the blessed Spirit of God ; The Inscription is nothing else but this, My love to poor loveless rebellious souls through my dearly beloved Son the Lord Jesus : The whole matter is nothing else but this, Come in and embrace my love.

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3. The Spirit reaveals that the Lord hath added his oath to it, *Heb. 6. 17.* And this he doth that the soul may receive the strongest consolation from the Lords intentions in the reality of his love.

4. The Spirit reveals the Lord hath confirmed it by Witnesses, 1 *John 5. 7. 8, 9.* The glorious Trinity, the three persons in one Essence, they are Witnesses to it. Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost are Witnesses in Heaven, and the Water and Blood are Witnesses on Earth.

5. The Spirit reveals, that the Lord hath confirmed it by Seals. The common broad Seals, I mean the Sacraments, that are outward Witnessing signs, or Confirming signs of the Lords intentions of love to Souls in the Lord Jesus. What is the Lords Supper but a meer confirming sign, to confirm the Soul in believing the Faithfulness of God, and his loving Souls in Jesus Christ; To witness to the Soul thus much, that as surely as he seeth the Bread broken, as he seeth the Wine poured out, so surely did the glorious God of Heaven and Earth, send the Dearly Beloved of his own Soul cloathed with an humane nature, to have his Body broker, and his Blood poured out, that thereby there might be an union with himself, for such a rebellious Soul. Nay the Lord hath given his privy Signet, which is the Seal of his own Spirit, that his Spirit should assuredly Witness and Seal up unto Souls, his love in receiving them into Union with the Lord Jesus.

3. The Spirit reveals the nature of God himself to the soul. It is not the knowledge of what God hath said, but the knowledge of what God is in himself, that causeth the soul to trust in him, *Psal. 9. 10. They that know thy name will trust in thee*; That is, they that

that know the Lord indeed : while the nature of God is unknown, unbelief of necessity bares rule in every Soul.

4. The Spirit of God reveals the Lords removal of all causes of suspicion or Jealousie whatever, concerning the Lords faithfulness and love. There are but two general grounds of Jealousie.

First, Some experience of the unfaithfulness of God. Now the Spirit hath prevented the least imaginary ground this way; in regard the Lord hath never failed in performing to the uttermost, all the love he expressed hitherto,

Secondly, The second ground of Jealousie must be some fear of the Lords taking dislike of the Soul, because of the Souls unfaithfulness to God. Now the Spirit of God reveals to the Soul, the Lords removal of all grounds of suspicion, by shewing the Lord intends not to take any dislike from loving of souls, whatever imaginary wickedness the Soul should commit against him : That is, the Spirit reveals the Lords declaration of passing by the treachery and filthiness of the Soul, or remembering its iniquity no more; That is, the Spirit reveals the Lords constant acceptance of Souls after treachery, without respect to the treachery, to diminish his love for it, *Jer. 3. 1.*

5. And lastly, The Spirit of God reveals the Lords pressing urgent persuasions, invitations, and commands, to a fulness of confidence of all the love to poor Souls that he hath expressed to them. Thereupon the Spirit comes to argue thus, Wilt thou not trust the Lord, that knows his own love and compassions best of all ? He alone knows himself, and thou art not able to comprehend him; The light that thou hast is but a small spark, saith the
 Spirit;

Spirit of God, to that great light that dwels in him, and wilt thou trust to thine own spark of light, rather then to the fountain of light? Hereby in all these ways the Spirit of God removes this Jealous Distemper, plucks out this Beam from the Soules Eyes, and brings the Soul into a precious believing frame. This is the First part of the Fourth Distemper that the Spirit of God must remove, and that is the Jealousie of God.

There is a second Branch of this Jealousie, or a second way, how this Distemper of Jealousie works; and that is as it works towards the Soules own heart. The Devil endeavours to make the Soul Jealous of his own heart, and would have him suspect that his own wicked heart cannot receive the will of God rightly, and to make it fear it should close falsely, if it should think of receiving the blessed will of God. This Distemper of Jealousie is hardly healed, because it hath so strong a hold, it comes under the shape of Godliness, It hath a pretence of the greatest sincerity and integrity that is possible, it tells the Soul it is a sign of sincerity to be jealous of its own deceitfulness, it tells the Soul it were a sign of presumption if it were not jealous.

This Distemper we shall endeavour to discover, and for the clearing of it you must conceive, that I do not condemn all jealousy in a Soul. There are divers kindes of Jealousie that the Scripture speaks of.

1. There is a Jealousie over others, least they should miscarry. Which is a holy supition mingled with a holy fear of their departing from God, and also joyned with a strength of desire of their keeping close unto God. This kind of jealousy

was in the heart of *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 11. 2. *I am jealous over you with a Godly Jealousie, that I may present you as a chaste Virgin unto Christ.*

2. There may be a jealousy in the heart that is occasioned upon the sight of good in others, and the excellency they have attained to. That's a kind of emulation ; That you shall read of *Rom.* 11. 11. *Paul* tells the *Jews*, that God had not cast them off altogether out of a purpurpose that they might fall, but that through their fall the Gentiles might be called, that the *Jews* might be provoked to Jealousie ; that is, that they might be provoked to a kind of emulation, to envy to go beyond the *Gentiles* : Thus a Christians heart may be Jealous, least another go before him, and attain to a greater degree of holiness then his Soul attaineth to : This is a Godly Jealousie.

3. There is a Jealousie over the deceitfulness of the heart, least the cursed heart should delude it, and prove treacherous, and joyn hand in hand with the Devil in some cursed Plot against the Soul. This is a Godly Jealousie if it be kept within bounds : This Jealousie over the heart, if it be right, is a compounded affection, made up of two simple affections, of the zeal of love, and the zeal of hatred : Or rather, it is a kind of third thing that ariseth from both these, that is a zeal of love to God, and the ways of God, and a zeal of hatred against whatever is contrary to the will of the blessed God, so that there arises a kind of suspicion of every thing that may possibly step in to dishonour God. This Jealousie hath but two objects to which it can work.

1. All things that may step in to be corral with God. That is, whatever might strive to insinuate

into the heart, to steal away the heart from God, or to be co-sharer with God, to be a fellow beloved one with God himself: Thus the world and all the world affords, comes in to be the object concerning which the Soul exerciseth this Jealousie, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, these strive with all their strength to be corrivals with God in the heart, to have as equal a share in the heart as God, and to be as highly loved and honoured as God. Now over these things the heart may be exceeding Jealous, and ought to maintain a constant Jealousie.

2. The second object of Jealousie is the Souls own act towards God. That is, whatever working there may be towards God, there may be a disposition in the heart to deal fainedly and hypocritically. Now in that regard because the heart is treacherous against it self, a heart false to God, filled with enmity against God, therefore all the actions and motions of the heart, are the objects upon which this Jealousie may be exercised in a right holy godly way. There may be five acts of Jealousie in every Soul lawfull, nay that ought to be.

1. The Soul may be so Jealous of it self, as to call his heart to a strict account, concerning all the motions of it, throughout all the whole course of his conversation. He may be so suspicious, as never to give credit to his heart in any thing, any further than it can give a good account to him, in all the motions of it.

First, It may call its heart to account, in what degree it hath wrought towards any of those objects. To call the heart to account, whether the affections did not run out too much after the world.

Secondly, It may call its heart to account, concerning

cerning the occasions it hath had to deal with any object whatever.

2. The Soul may discover the danger, and spread forth all the evil before the treacherous heart. The Spirit of Jealousie may work so far, that it may strive to put a bit and bridle into the wanton heart to restrain it ; It may strive to propound principles that may prevent its treachery.

3. A soul may cry mightily to God with all his strength, to prevent the wretched deceitfulness of his own heart : To discover all the hidden by-paths that his own heart hath to walk in, to give him light from heaven to see every step that his heart sets.

4. The Soul may summons his own deceitful heart to appear before the Lord, to act as in the sight of the heart-searching God, in its closing with the Lord Christ tendered.

5. It may so work as to cause the soul to renounce all confidence in it self, of an uprightness in his own heart, in its closing with the Lord Christ tendered. So that thus far you see, there is a Holy Jealousie of Spirit, over the cursed deceitful heart, that may possess, yea ought to possess any Godly Soul. But there is a distempered Jealousie too, that darkens the Soul, and prevents the Souls receiving assurance to his faith from the promise of his union with Christ ; and that is when this Spirit of Jealousie works in these four or five ways.

1. When the Spirit of Jealousie prevails so far, as to obtain the sole command of the heart. Now this Jealousie cometh to be the rage of a man, so as it becomes a distempered passion, instead of a holy affection ; So as instead of putting the soul into a precious way of searching out the deceit of his own heart,

heart, it rather draws conclusions against it self, without weighing and examining, what the deceits of the heart are that are suspected.

2. When this Jealousie makes the Soul negligent or careless of the use of the means, to find out the truth of what it suspects. So that in stead of this, the heart sits down under those fears and suspicions, crying out, my wretched heart will deceive me, I dare not think of receiving the Lord Jesus tendered.

3. When the Soul is so overcome with Jealousie, that it takes no account of it self, of the ground of the working of the Jealousie. It is the ordinary distemper of Souls that are overcome with this Jealousie, that they never look out to the precious promises, wherein the Lord engages himself to prevent the deceitfulness of the heart, and its departing from God.

4. When this Jealousie so prevails, as it is taken up by the Soul as a sufficient Plea against the Souls present believing and receiving the Lord Jesus tendered. When the Soul sets this Jealousie over his own deceitfull heart like a bulwark, against all that can be propounded to him, to make him give credit to the will of God, and to yield obedience to the Lord Christ tendered: when the heart thinks it is enough that he is able to say, truly the very desire of my Soul is to yield obedience to the command of God in believing, fain would I receive the Lord Jesus tendered, but alas I have such a cursed deceitfull heart that I dare not, least my heart delude me.

5. When the Jealousie over the heart prevails so much, as the Soul spends all his thoughts in finding out the uprightness of his heart in closing, before the
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the soul venture upon an actual closing with the Lord Jesus as tendered. When a Soul through this Jealousie sets porcing and gazing upon the many windings and turnings of his own spirit, and calling to remembrance how wretchedly his heart deluded him formerly, and hereupon concludes with himself, that he may not close till he can see the uprightness of his heart, in closing with the Lord Jesus ; And so thereupon afterwards spends all his prayers, and pours out all his desires to God for uprightness, for integrity of heart in closing, and in the mean time forbearing that actual closing that the Lord requires without the least delay from every Soul. Thus you see also how this Jealousie comes to work in a sinfull way, and becomes a sinfull Distemper ; And indeed when *the spirit of* cometh thus ^{to} work, it exceedingly darkens the Soul, *Jealousie* and prevents its discerning what the promise holds forth.

1. In regard Jealousie prevents the souls gazing upon the absolute promise that is tendered to the soul. Now the soul must needs be kept from discerning what the promise holds forth, when it is kept from so much as looking into the promise ; for though there be habitual divine light in the promise, yet thats not usefull till it be drawn out into exercise. Habitual divine light in the understanding, is like the eye when it is asleep, or like the eye when it is shut, It is the exercise of that, that makes the soul discern any thing that the Lord discovers in the promises ; And then it is the very gazing upon the promise, that draws out that divine light formerly received in exercise also.

2. This Distemper of Jealousie maintains perpetual fear in the soul, of its false applying of the promise

mise of the Lord Jesus. Fear is always the companion of Jealousie, the more fearful the soul is, the more jealous, and the more jealous the soul is, the more fearful; and those fears are like a thick fog or mist, that darkens the divine light received: So that by this means the soul is kept from discerning any of those beams of divine light in any clearness, that the promise of God holds forth; and thereby the soul is kept from discerning his union with the Lord Jesus, that might be discerned from the promises. Now this jealousy over the heart it self must be healed, before the soul can receive clear satisfaction to it self of its union with Christ.

Two ways the spirit of God usually heals this.

1. The spirit presseth with all urgency upon the soul, the present immediate necessity of his yielding obedience to the command of God, without any pretence whatever of any delay and deferring. Commonly upon these distempers of Jealousie prevailing, the soul denies not the Lord Jesus tendered, only conceiveth himself to have sufficient ground to delay and defer a while, till he see clearly a more suitable uprightness in his heart to close. Now the spirit comes upon the soul, and presses it upon his heart to be his duty immediately without the least delay; Hereby the soul begins to be drawn to adventure to believe, though it be with trembling, lest his wretched heart should deceive him.

2. The spirit discovers to the soul, the independency of his own interest in the promise, upon any act of his own considered in himself. The spirit clears to the soul the Lords engagement of himself, as well to make the heart faithful, and true and upright, in receiving the Lord Jesus tendered, as to give the Lord

Lord Jesus to the soul that would receive him. The spirit it may be brings such a promise as that *Jer. 31. 33. I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God and they shall be my people;* and reveals to the soul from thence, the Lords engagement of himself to put in faithfulness into the deceitful hypocritical heart, whereby the close shall be in truth and sincerity, notwithstanding all the wretched wickedness of his own heart striving to deceive him.

The Fifth Dark Distemper is, The souls measuring and judging its self, too too much by other Christians, by the graces *Dark Distemper.* and excellencies that shine forth in other souls.

We shall open it to you, how far it is lawful for a soul thus to measure himself by other Christians, and by the rule of their graces: And then how this distemper comes to prevail, and how it works. It must be concluded, that there is a lawfulness in a souls measuring himself by the rule and line of the graces of other Christians, to try his own heart and way, by comparing his own heart & way by the heart & way of other Christians as far as he can discern. There are seven or eight particular a^cs that are not only lawful for a soul in this case, but the soul is bound to them.

1. Every soul allured towards the Lord Jesus, ought with the greatest diligence and circumspection that is possible, to have a full prospect, a full view, into the hearts and lives of other Christians. The Lord hath intended from eternity, to propose the whole number of Saints, like so many glorious heavenly Stars, set in the lower region of the earth, from whence the beams of his own excellency may shine

shine forth : They are set like so many Suns in the Firmament, for all the World to gaze upon ; according to *Prov. 4. 18. The righteous is like the Sun, that shineth more and more untill the perfect day* : Yea further, The precious beams of the Lords own glory, are appointed to shine forth through their light ; So that every soul neglects the beholding of the glory of God himself, in the precious glasses that he hath appointed for his people, to see the reflection of his glory in, when they neglect to make a diligent search into the hearts of all Christians within view.

2. Every soul ought, in the view that he takes of the hearts and lives of Saints and their graces, to have a reflection upon his heart and life, and his own grace. Every soul ought to look upon these Saints, as we look upon glasses, that we may discern our own faces.

3. Every Christian ought to compare his own graces, with the graces he discerns in all Christians within his view. First, they ought to measure the graces themselves. Secondly, the expressions of those graces in their duties. First, they ought to measure the graces themselves, even the inward habits of grace, so far as they can discern them in others. 1. They ought to compare the strength of their own graces, with the strength and vigor of those graces they discern in other Christians. 2. They ought to compare the strength of their own graces with the graces of others, in the fruit and increase of it. When any Christian flourisheth, like a Tree planted by the waters side, that brings forth his fruit in due season, every Christian ought to compare the growth of his own grace, to the growth of the grace of such a Christian. 3. They ought to compare the time of growth of the grace of such a Christian, with the time that their grace hath
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had to grow. 4. To compare the means of growth of grace. A soul discerning any grace exercised in any Christian, ought to consider what means he hath had to grow to that eminency in such a grace; whether have I had the same means? whether hath the means been as effectual upon my heart, as upon such a Christian? 5. To compare the liveliness and activity of all those graces constantly, with the liveliness and activity of their own. Secondly, they ought to compare the expressions of their own graces in way of duty to God, with the expressions of the graces of others.

First, in the quantity of the duties.

Secondly, in the quality of the duties.

First, in the quantity of the duties, in the number and bulk of them, God sometimes stands much upon quantity of duty to his people: Therefore upon a souls discerning some Christians to be much in duty, it may be to spend much time in prayer, they ought to compare themselves and their own duties, with the duties of others. Only these two rules are to be observed in it. First, to observe whether the duties of any such Christians be not extended too far, that they do not place the opinion of all good in duty, that they do not bound and stint God to such a length in duty. Now duties may be extended too far, there may be excess in performing duties of prayer. 1. When ordinary duties are performed in excess by a soul without an extraordinary occasion. 2. When duties are extended beyond the souls ability and opportunity. Ability and opportunity are constant limitations set to all the duties God requires. Secondly, this rule also must be observed. That a soul does keep a right proportion, in all his measuring of his own duties by others duties. 1. Every soul upon discerning any Christian.

Christian to excell in the quantity of duty, ought to compare his own ability with others ability. According as the Lord giveth so he requireth, to whom much is given from him he expects much. *Luke 12. 48.* Though the duty of one Christian should not be so much in quantity, as the duty of another, yet it may be as much, considering the souls ability every way, for the duty that he performeth. 2. The soul must always look to proportion the occasion. It must see upon what occasion such a Christian is so much exercised in duties, and see whether the same occasion be his souls. In time of temptation, or in time of violent corruption, or in time of much inward bitterness of soul, it ought to exercise the quantity of duties, more than at another time. If occasions come in extraordinary, the Lord requires extraordinary duties. As in *2 Cor. 12. 7, 8*, when *Paul* was urged with an extraordinary temptation, a thorn prickt him in the flesh, then *Paul* falls upon extraordinary duty, he prayed thrice, that is often. So in *Act. 12*, when *Peter* was in prison, and likely to be brought to execution, the Church went to prayer without ceasing. 3. The soul must always proportion his own opportunity, to the opportunity of those he discerns to be much in duty. Opportunity is a talent as well as any thing else, and the Lord expects the improvement of that talent as well as other talents: where the Lord gives opportunity for duty, he requireth much duty. 4. The soul also is to proportion its necessity. Now the necessities of souls are various: One needs a great deal of food to maintain the life of his soul, and another may be maintained with less. 5. There must be a proportion held in the spiritual engagements and obligations, wherein a soul stands

engaged to God. 1. The proportion must be observed, in the souls reception of the spirit of adoption from God. The more fully the spirit of adoption is come down into the heart, the more necessarily is the heart engaged to duty, and to greater multiplication of duty, in regard by the receipt of the holy spirit of adoption, there is greater ability conveyed into the soul for the duty. 2. The soul must hold proportion in his revelations of the truth of God to the soul. The more clear beams of divine light of truth, the Lord communicates to any soul, the more deeply is that soul engaged to God & unto duty. 3. The soul must proportion the engagement of the Lords making his person more conspicuous to the world. The more conspicuously the Lord sets up any soul, to be gazed upon by the world, the more doth the Lord engage the soul to all kind of duty. 4. They must proportion the degree of communion, that God vouchsafeth to take the soul into with himself. Gradually according to the degree of communion the soul hath with God, so are the souls engagements to the multiplication of duty. That's the first branch of this way of measuring, The soul must measure the quantity of his duties.

Secondly, The soul must also measure and compare the quality of his own duties, with the quality of the duties he perceiveth to be performed by others. It is not the bulk only God accepts, but it is the manner, the spirituality, the exactness and exquisiteness of the performing those duties, that the Lord especially looks at. The Israelites seldom failed in the bulk of the duty the Lord required, they gave him his Oxen, and Lambs, and He Goats and Sheep, and the like; but they failed in the spirituality

rituality of those duties of worship that the Lord required, and therefore the Lord called those oblations, vain oblations. So that though the quantity of a souls duty should hold proportion with the quantity of the duty of others, yet he must look whether the quality will hold proportion, whether the spirituality of the duty will proportion with their duty, whether there be as much inward adoration before God, as much inward self abasement of spirit, as much strength in pursuing after Communion with God. Neither is it sufficient for the quality of duties to hold proportion with the quality of the duties of some other Christians, but all the former rules also must be observed as far as they can be applied to this. Where the Lord hath furnished with more inward ability, and inward strength, there he looks for the duty to excell in quality as well as quantity. Thus you have the third act of the soul opened, which is the comparing of his own graces, with the graces it discerns in the hearts and lives of other Christians.

4. Fourthly, The soul may from comparing himself with other Christians, and his graces and his duties with theirs, endeavour to convict himself of all the evil that can be found out, either in his heart or life.

1. To convince him of all his voluntary defects. By discerning how the principles of other Christians are improved to the honour of God; the soul may convince himself of his wilfull defects, that he that hath received the same principle, should walk so far contrary to God.

2. The Soul may endeavour to convince it self, of all his unsuitable walking to his Profession, by gazing upon the brightness of that principle of Christianity professed by other Christians, that shine forth in their Conversations.

3. The Soul may endeavour to convince it self of his own unsuitableness in his walking, to his engagements unto God.

4. And lastly, of his unsuitableness to the rest of the Members of the Body of Christ.

V. Every Soul ought to endeavour to break his own Heart, for any disproportion he can discern between his own Life and the Lives of other Christians; between his own Grace, and their Graces. There are many pretious Soul-melting arguments, that a Soul may help it self to towards the breaking of his own heart, for any unsuitable walking towards Jesus Christ, by measuring his own Life and Graces, with the Graces of other Christians.

1. The Soul may be helped to a clearer sight of the transcendency of the riches of the Lords Grace in Christ to his Soul.

2. The Soul may have a discovery of the superlative degree of the perverseness of his Heart to God. Seeing the disproportion between himself and other Christians; he may say, Lord, what a cursed, crooked, hellish, perverse Heart have I!

3. The Soul may have a discovery of the height of dishonour done to Jesus Christ by him, when he shall see that those that he professes himself to be fellow members with, so bearing up the brightness of the Image of Jesus Christ in their Conversations; and then reflect upon himself, and see scarce

so much as any spark of that glorious Image of Christ to shine forth in him.

4. From thence the Soul may have an inward holy shame to seize upon it, to see the growth and increase of the Members of Christ, his Brethren, and see himself so barren, so empty and poor.

VI. Every Soul may and ought to pass the sentence of condemnation against his own Soul, from a discovery of any unfutableness in his Heart and Life, to the Hearts and Lives of other Christians.

VII. A Soul may measure himself so far by the Graces of others, as to draw quickning arguments from thence, to awaken his Heart to more watchfulness, diligence and circumspection.

1. From the sight of the Graces of other Christians excelling his own, a Soul may and ought to propound to himself the Lords separation of his Soul as only peculiar to himself, as well as the Souls of those that so much excel him in Grace.

2. A Soul may from thence propound to himself, the Lords predestination of him, to as full a participation of the fulness of Christ, as any of those that he sees excel him in Grace. From thence the Soul may argue with God, why should others have such a large spark of Grace from Christ, when I am so empty and poor, and have scarce any thing of Christ.

3. A Soul may from hence find out this argument, that the glory and honour of Jesus Christ as much depends upon his Soul, as upon the Souls of other Christians that so far excel him in Grace.

4. The Soul may from thence propound to himself a necessity of conformity between all the mem-
bers

bers of Jesus Christ, and thereby awaken his Heart to strive for the height of perfection, or Grace, that he discerns in any Christian.

VIII. And lastly, the Soul may and ought to keep a constant view of the Graces of all other Christians within his sight, with a constant reflection upon his own Heart, so as to provoke him to Jealousie, to a kind of Emulation, least other Christians should magnifie and exalt the name of Jesus Christ, by a sutable conversation, more than he. Thus you see how far it is lawful for any Christian to measure himself by other Christians, by their Hearts and Lives, their Graces and Duties.

The second thing to be opened is, when a Soul measuring himself by other Christians becomes a dark sinful distemper; or when a Soul measures himself too too much by other Christians; so that by measuring himself by others, he keeps himself from that blessed heavenly light that should shine into his Heart, whereby he might receive satisfaction of his union with Christ. There are four ways, how this measuring a mans self by other Christians, becomes a dark distemper.

I. When a man makes his conformity to the Graces and Duties of other Christians, to be the ground of his Faith; either in the first act of Faith, in consenting to the blessed will of God revealed, or else in the renewed exercise of Faith again upon any occasion. That is thus, when the Soul conceives himself to have good grounds to hope that the Lord is willing to accept his Soul into union with Christ, when he sees the same holiness and activity of Spirit for God, the same Heavenliness and Spirituality, the same pretious

Dispositions working in their strength in his Soul to God, that he discerns to be in other Christians: And on the contrary the Soul conceives himself to have no good ground to believe the Lords willingness to accept his loveless Soul in Christ; when he discerns a great disproportion between his Heart and other Christians; when he beholds his own Heart dead, and other Christians lively; his own Heart shut up, and others enlarged in all their faculties towards God. This distemper is both exceeding sinful, and exceeding dark, when it grows once to this.

1. It is a proportioning the love of God towards poor loveless Souls, according to the proportion of Grace and Holiness in that Soul. Yea the Soul by this makes the Eternal unchangeable love of God to be alterable, various, and changeable, according to the alterations and variations of Mans Heart.

2. It is a vailing and eclipsing at least, if not a nullifying, the freedom of the Lords love in Christ, to poor loveless despicable Souls. It is a making the Lords love to depend upon the Graces and Holiness in Souls, and to be conveyed into Souls upon that ground.

3. It makes the Soul nullifie, undervalue, and wretchedly disparage all the pretious promises in Gods blessed Book. The Soul makes those unchangeable Words of God insufficient to support and uphold a poor sinking, troubled, laden Soul, and to satisfie it concerning Gods will, to receive it into union with himself in the Lord Jesus.

4. It is a departing from the pretious Springs of Consolation, digged by the Omnipotent God for thirsty Souls, and a choosing a poor empty dry brook.

II. When

II. When a Soul in making a just parallel between himself and others, makes every defect that he beholds in the proportion of his own Graces and Duties, to the Graces and Duties of other Christians, to be a sufficient ground whence to draw a conclusion of his contrary state, to the state of other Christians, that he beholds to excel him in so a high a measure. When it riseth to this, it becomes a sinful dark distemper, and that will appear in divers things,

1. This may prove a measuring of Gods love, by the acts of his love.

2. It may be an arguing meerly from a Souls want of light to discern Gods good will to him in Christ.

3. It makes the Soul draw a conclusion of the total want of the being of Grace; while a Soul thus concludes, because he seeth no Graces shining forth in himself, as he doth in others, that therefore he is not beloved of God in Christ; it may come to argue in this manner, because I see my Soul is not such a burning and shining light, as such a Christian, therefore I am not so much as smoaking flax.

4. This argument from the defect of Grace, may be an argument from the Souls infirmity. It may be but an argument from the Tyranny that some lust hath exercised over the Heart, to the concluding it is under the voluntary service of his lust.

5. It may be a reasoning from the want of fruitfulness in Christianity, to the want of Christianity it self, and the want of all fruitfulness whatsoever. Now when the Soul is about to draw such

conclusions as these, from its measuring it self by other Christians, let these things be observed;

1. He must first assure himself, that the defect he beholds in his own Soul is a sinful defect. Four things the Soul must be assured the defect comes not from, before he can be assured the defect is Sin.

First, That it is not barely through the suspension of the influence of the comforting Spirit of Christ.

Secondly, It must be assured that the defects he beholds in his own Soul, of the Graces of others, be not through the Lords suspending the arbitrary influences of the quickning Spirit of Christ. You must conceive there are influences that are for the Souls Being, and influences that are for the Souls well Being. These influences of the quickning Spirit of Christ that are for the Souls Being, are never withdrawn; But the influences that are for the Souls well Being, are communicated in various degrees, to various Souls, which therefore I call arbitrary influences of the Spirit of Christ, that is, such as God disposes of according to his meer pleasure to the Soul, in divers degrees, at divers times, and to divers Souls in divers ~~times~~ *degrees*.

Thirdly, The Soul must be assured, that the defect he beholds in his own Soul, in respect of the Graces of other Christians, proceeds not only from the defects of gifts, thar others furnished with the same Graces enjoy above him. Gifts are like precious cundit-pipes, that the Lord hath appointed to let out the streams of the Spirit of Jesus Christ through: Now if another Soul hath more abundance of those kind of gifts, more readiness

of

of Capacity, quickness of Understanding, greater depths in the apprehension of the things of Christ, clearness of light, more readiness of expression; Then thy Soul may be deceived, in judging a greater degree of Grace in such a Soul than in thy Soul; in regard he hath a greater opportunity of expression of Grace, and a greater aptness to hold forth Grace received, than thou hast.

Fourthly, The Soul must be assured that it is not from the defect of the means and opportunity only, without any negligence of any means by the Soul, that his defect of Grace proceeds from.

2. The Soul must be assured, that those defects that he beholds in himself, are such defects as are altogether inconsistent with the state of the union of the Soul with Christ. Whatever gives a true and sufficient demonstration of its cause, must be an effect that proceeds properly from such a cause only, that cannot proceed from another cause.

3. The Soul must be also sure that Spiritual Rashness, and Wilfulness, or Ignorance, or Temptation, do not overcloud his Judgment, in his searching out and trying the defects in the Soul. ~~Therein~~ I shall advise to three things.

1. The Soul ought to be sure that he trust not his own light alone.

2. The Soul ought to bring all things, both in their substance, and in their circumstances, that are worthy to be weighed, to the rule of the Word alone.

3. A Soul must endeavour that his Judgment be settled by God. Thats thus; The Soul that hath his Judgment past upon his own defects, and the

nature of them to be such, as is inconsistent with the state of union with Christ, must endeavour to draw near to God; to bring himself into the presence of the Heart searching God, with a serious apprehension, and meditation, that all the secrets of his Spirit are open before God; and then, and there in this frame to view over again, and meditate upon, that Judgment that he finds himself ready to pass against his own Soul, and then observe whether his Spirit then dare pass this conclusion against himself.

III. When a Soul in measuring himself by others, makes the defect of Grace in himself, to be the matter of discouragement of his Soul, and matter of impediment to the exercise of his Faith in Christ. That is, when the Soul by looking upon some other Christians, and beholding many pretious, gracious, holy dispositions shine forth, like so many Stars in the lower orb, when he sees much holy fire drop down from Heaven into their Hearts, that drop forth in their Conversations; and looks upon himself and sees a defect in all: Sees his own Heart overgrown with dulness, stupidity, blockishness, carelessness, forgetfulness of God, regardlessness of Communion with God in Christ, and the Soul makes these defects of Grace apprehended in himself, matter of discouragement to his Soul, to beat it off, and to keep it back from the exercise of Faith. Then this distemper of Judging themselves by others prevails too far.

1. It is a joyning with the wretched, corrupt, opposit Heart against Christ, and the furnishing the Soul with matter of cavil and scruple, against the blessed tenders of receiving the love of Jesus Christ.

2. By

2. By this the Soul maketh that part of his duty that he seems to perform, to be nothing but disobedience. The Soul by looking upon the Graces that shine forth in any Christian, seems to do a part of his duty, because it is one thing commanded; and in reflecting upon his own Heart in the sight of those Graces, seems to do another part of his duty; but both these are made disobedience, when the Soul makes the defect of Grace, he finds in himself, when he looks upon the Graces of others, discouragements to himself in exercising Faith.

3. The Soul crosses God in his highest end, which is to make the excellencies of Jesus Christ shine forth in the Souls of his People.

IV. The fourth case wherein a Soul doth measure himself too much by others, so as it becomes a sinful distemper, is, when the disproportion a Soul finds out between himself and other Christians; his Graces and their Graces, his Duties and their Duties, are made a sufficient ground for the Soul, to draw a final conclusion of his own estate from. As thus, when a Soul argueth in this manner, I see there are none of those precious workings of the Spirit of God in my Spirit, that I behold, and see apparent, are in the Spirits of such and such Christians; they have their Hearts so powerfully drawn by Jesus Christ to close with him in a way of union, that they are inabled by a mighty power from God to believe; but, saith the Soul, I do not find that God draws my Heart, and comes with a mighty power to constrain my Soul to close with the Lord Jesus tendred, and therefore surely God never intended good to my Soul. That this is a dark and sinful distemper, will appear

appear in divers things, for there may be many disproportions between one Christian and another, that are not sinful disproportions.

1. There may be a disproportion without a mans sin, in the manner, and order, and degree, yea in the very Being of all the workings of God in the Soul, before the actual union of the Soul with Christ, by any act of believing.

First, There may be a disproportion in the fear of Conscience, that other Christians have had upon them, before their actual consent to the Lord Christ tendred, and the fear of Conscience that thou hast hitherto had.

Secondly, A disproportion may be in the grief of mind for sin, that other Christians have had upon them for sin, before their union with Christ, and the grief of mind thy Soul hath hitherto had upon that.

Thirdly, There may be a disproportion in the effects that fear of Conscience and grief of mind do naturally produce in Souls: As doubtfulness, and multitude of scruples and objections against thine own Soul. These indeed are the common effects that grief of mind and the fear of conscience produce: And there may be a great disproportion between thy doubtings, and the doubtings of other Christians, and yet no sin neither, as appears in this; because neither fear of Conscience, nor doubt of mind, nor scruples and objections against the Soul, do in the least commend any Soul to God: As all things are sin before union with Christ, so is the fear of Conscience, and grief of mind, sin, and all those doubts and objections, sin, and therefore have not the least
virtue

vertue in them to commend a Soul to God.

2. There may be a disproportion in the degrees of Grace without sin.

First, There may have been a difference in the time of the growth of his Grace, and the Graces of others by which he measures himself. It may be he yet remains but a green tender plant in the House of the Lord, and measures himself by an old flourishing green Olive in Gods house.

Secondly, There may be a difference in the helps and means of growth. The field is not blamed because it is not so fruitful as the garden, when the garden is daily watered and dressed.

3. There may be a disproportion in the actings of Grace and yet no sin.

First, In regard there may not be the same necessity to occasion to act Grace in thee, that is in others. The occasions are like the Wind to the Ship, that set the Ship a going: They are but the heavenly Winds as it were, that blow upon Grace, that set Graces a working; and various Graces must and ought to work according to the variety of occasions; Now according to the necessity of the Soul, so God binds himself in Covenant to provide for the Soul.

Secondly, The Graces of other Christians, may be acted by an extraordinary influence of the quickning Spirit of Christ. I call it extraordinary, in regard it is that which is not common at all times, to all Christians, that have some of the influences of the quickning Spirit of Christ; so that by some extraordinary gale from Heaven his Graces may be acted, and through thy want of those quicknings of the Spirit of Christ, thy Graces may

may not be so acted, and yet not sin.

Thirdly, There may be a difference in the outward excitation, and quickning unto the actings of Grace. A Soul stands not only in necessity of the inward breathings of the Spirit of Christ, but of the outward excitation too, in regard it is through the outward excitation, that the Lord hath appointed those inward breathings of his quickning Spirit: Now if other Christians by whom thy Soul do measure it self, should enjoy more excitations, that is, that they have more Bellows blowing upon Grace in their Hearts than thine, though there may be difference in the acting, the bare disproportion may not be thy sin.

Secondly, There may be many sinful disproportions, that yet destroy not the Being of the Souls union with Christ.

1. There may be a disproportion in Faith it self.

First, There may be a want of most of the highest and excellent operations of Faith, and yet not the Being of union destroyed.

Secondly, Faith may be oppressed with doubting and distrust, and yet not be suppressed.

Thirdly, There may be the want of almost all steadfastness, stability and constancy in the acting of Faith; so that a Soul can seldom keep his Heart in a believing frame one moment, and yet that sinful defect may not nullifie the union with Christ.

2. There may be a sinful disproportion in all the Spiritual life of the Soul, and yet the union with Christ hold. That is, all the principles of Spiritual motion towards God, may be unactive, when

when thou seest others full of life and activity, and yet this sinfull disproportion doth not destroy the union. Now it appears to be a sad distemper thus to measure the Soul by others.

1. In regard ~~there is~~ ^{every} such a disproportion between the ~~one~~ and other Christians that can possibly be found out, discovers nothing but the heinousness of the Souls sin, in its neglect of union with Christ. Now from hence to conclude God intends no good to the Soul, is contrary to the blessed will of God revealed, *Isa. 55. 7.* where God hath promised, *abundantly to pardon, to multiply to pardon.*

2. In regard when the greatest disproportion between the ~~one~~ and other Christians is found out, yet thou art one of those that Jesus Christ now comes to woo, and perswade, and beseech to be one with his Father.

Now I shall shew you the grounds of this distemper upon which it is built, or whence it arises in Souls.

1. It is commonly built upon this principle, That the Lord maintains a proportion in his Gifts and Graces unto his people. Now what a dark blind principle is this. For the clearing of it,

1. You must conceive, the Lord doth equally dispense to all his peoples Souls all kind of Graces. He leaves suitable dispositions in the Heart to yield obedience to all his blessed will: Thus far the Lord proportions Grace; but then the Lord doth not proportion the degrees of Grace.

First, In regard of the concord and agreement in the whole Body of Christ that is necessary to be attained. It is for the bettering of the union of the

the Body of Christ, that Christians have particular different Graces, as the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 12. 25, 26.

Secondly, It is necessary to preserve the beauty and comeliness of the Body of Christ, that the whole Body should be so compacted together, that one member should not receive all the excellencies of the other members.

Thirdly, That there might be a full manifestation of the absolute freedom of God, in the manifestation of all his Graces. The Lord will not only have the glory of his free love, in dispensing Grace to whom he pleases, but the glory of his free Grace in dispensing it in what manner and degree he please.

2. From the necessity of different degrees of Grace, arises a necessity of the dispensation of various Gifts.

II. The second distemper upon which this principle doth arise is this, That the Soul doth conceive there must be a large portion of Grace go before the Souls attaining unto the assurance of Faith, that he is united to the Lord Christ. And thence the Soul seeks into the Lives and Hearts of other Christians, and measures himself by those, thinking upon a sight of a conformity in himself to them in their Graces and Duties; he might then proceed to the actings of Faith in a way of assurance, and then have some confidence of his union with Christ: And hence so long as the Soul conceives a defect in himself, in those Graces he beholds to be in other Christians, he sits down discouraged from the exercise of Faith. That this also is a vile principle of darkness must be al-

so made appear. Yet, first, for the clearing of it I must premise two things.

I. That the very act of Faith in a way of full assurance, of the Lords accepting the Soul to be one with him in Christ, is a most superlative degree of Grace.

II. That every Soul that attains unto that assurance of Faith, to receive with a fulness of confidence, the Lords good will concerning his own Soul, to accept him to be one with him in the Lord Christ, doth attain a large portion of all kind of Graces also. There are the special workings of the love of God in the Spirit of holiness, wherever there is this assurance unto Faith of the Souls union with Christ. To make it clear,

1. There is a large portion of knowledge. Ignorance of God is the mother of all vice, the very womb wherein unbelief is conceived withal its Brats, withal its scruples and objections whatever. And according to the degree wherein that Ignorance of God is healed, so is the degree of the Souls attaining towards the assurance of Faith.

2. There is a large portion of Spiritual life begotten in the Soul.

3. There is a large portion of contentment in God and Christ.

4. There is a large portion of love to God in Jesus Christ communicated to him. Love begets love, and according to the degree, wherein a Soul apprehends the love of God to his Soul in Christ; so is the answerable degree of the workings of love towards God in Christ again.

5. There

5. There is a large portion of raisedness of Spirit, above all things below. I give but a taste of the large portion of Grace, which of necessity must be in Souls where Faith of assurance is attained. But now to speak more directly to the principle it self: notwithstanding this, yet the principle it self is a dark principle.

I. In regard there is no necessity of a large portion of Grace, going before the Souls assurance of Faith, to prepare the Soul for assurance. Only in this sence, that the habit of Grace prepares the Soul for the acting of Grace; so the habit of Faith is received before there be an act of Faith; and so a Soul may be said to be prepared for assurance unto Faith.

II. There is no necessity of any large portions of Grace, to give the Soul any better ground to act Faith in fulness of assurance and confidence. The only ground of the Souls confidence of the Lords will, to accept his loveless Soul into union with Christ, is the Lords word, wherein he reveals that his blessed will: Now the Lords word speaks as plainly, and reveals his will as clearly to the Soul, not having the least portion of Grace to accept his loveless Soul into union with Christ, as it doth to those that have the largest portion of Grace.

III. There is no necessity of any portion of Grace to make the actings of Faith of assurance to be the Souls duty. Even when a Soul is a rebel, when he is an enemy, the Lord doth as strictly command him from Heaven, to give credit to his blessed Word, revealing his good will to accept his loveless Soul, if he will be one with him in Christ,

Christ, as he doth command the Soul to believe it, after the communication of all Grace.

IV. Those very portions of Grace, great or small that are attained to, when the Soul hath assurance unto Faith, they are all attained through the Souls believing with that fulness of assurance. Faith is the *Alpha* and *Omega* of Sanctification, and of the whole work of Grace.

The Sixth and last dark distemper is, *Dark distemper.*
The Souls unconstancy. This unconstancy is of two kinds; the one in the thoughts and imaginations; the second is the unconstancy of the Souls determinations and conclusions. Naturally we are unstable as water, seldom stay a moment in the same place. For the right understanding of this distemper there must be divers things opened.

I. We must know, it is not a strict, close, unmovable adherence to their determinations of truth, that are once drawn up in a Soul, that these commands require from any Soul; that may be as bad a distemper on the other hand. Therefore observe there are three cases in which a Soul may be too much settled, and adhere too fast to his own conclusions.

1. When the Soul sticks fast to any conclusion, without Spiritual divine light, compelling and constraining the Soul to it.

2. When a Soul is so taken with any determination, that he hath drawn up in his own Spirit concerning truth, that his own Spirit will not suffer him to take a right view of any thing that the Scripture seems to propound to the contrary.

Q

3. When

3. When a Soul is so affected with any determination drawn up in his own Spirit, that he hath a prejudicial opinion against whatever seems to contradict that his own determination.

II. You must know there are cases wherein there must and ought to be alterations and changes, in a Souls own determination concerning Truth, and concerning the State of his own Soul, And those cases are especially two.

1. Where there is clearer evidence concerning the object conveyed into a Soul.

2. When there is a clearer evidence in regard of the Soul it self, which we commonly call a clearer evidence in regard of the subject. If a Soul through weakness of light received, conclude or determine of any thing concerning his Soul, then there must and ought to be a change of these determinations, when there is a clearer evidence come into his Soul.

III. There may lawfully be a suspicion, and a jealousy over it self in regard of its own uncon-
stancy. A Soul may have a holy fear of his own deceitful Heart, when he sees it settled upon a conclusion, lest it should not be so rightly settled as God requires. There are two acts a Soul may do upon this ground.

1. He may be making a continual search into the grounds of those conclusions and determinations that are in his own Spirit.

2. A Soul may and ought to draw up his Spirit unto God, and to bring his determinations into the presence of God, and the ground of his determinations, and lay them all open before the Lord.

Now

Now it must be opened, when a Soul is guilty of this sad distemper of unconstancy, in his determinations and resolutions. There are three cases wherein the Soul is guilty of this.

I. When the Soul remains wavering, in an unfixed unsettled frame of Spirit, upon any determination that it doth draw up within it self. When a Soul apprehends reason on both sides, and weight in both reasons, and thereupon suffers his Soul to stand like Scales, with weights in both Scales almost in an equipoise, now turning this way, then that way, and stand steadfast no way: Now he conceives it is the will of God to accept his Soul into union with him, the next morning he conceives no; surely it cannot be that God should have a thought of kindness for such a wretch as he. Yet do not mistake here, for I must grant there may be such an equipoised Spirit in Souls without sin, so it be with these limitations.

1. That the truth of Christ concerning which the Soul remains in this wavering state, be not a matter of duty that God requires from the Souls hands. Some truths are more Theoretical, some more Practical; now if it be not a practical truth that God requires from the Soul, it may not be sin: But if it be a practical truth, concerning the Souls acting of Faith upon Jesus Christ tendred, or the Souls worshipping God in some ordinances of continual use; then though it be through weakness, and want of light, that the Soul is not able to have his Spirit settled upon a conclusion; yet I dare not excuse the Soul from sin, for I suppose no case can come, but the Soul is guilty of too much ignorance that he might have avoided, or guilty

of unbelief that keeps his Spirit in the present case unswayed.

2. Take this limitation, That such an unsettledness of Spirit concerning a truth, be after a Souls strict endeavouring for a full satisfaction and determination of his Spirit concerning that truth.

II. The Soul is guilty of this inconstancy, when the strength of imagination only doth unsettle the Soul from any determination or conclusion, concerning that truth of Christ that he hath formerly drawn up in his own Spirit. The Devil hath a secret door into every Heart through the fancy ; it is as it were the Devils back door, it is his secret sally-port door that he comes out of, to fight against the Soul. The Devil steals into the Heart by the fancy, before ever the Soul is aware of it, without any alarm, and by the working of the fancy he doth suggest strange imaginations in the Soul, without suggesting a ground and foundation, upon which such imaginations are built.

III. Then a Soul is guilty of this sad distemper, when it is unsettled and removed, from its determinations and conclusions, with every just objection, without a just comparison of the strength of the objection, and the reasoning of the objection, with the strength of the reasoning of the former perswasion and determination. This is that sad distemper the Scripture speaks of, *To be carried up and down with every wind of Doctrine, and to be soon shaken in mind*, 2 Thef. 2. 1, 2.

Now the distemper being thus opened in general, you must note that there are three special conclusions, in reference to the case in hand, concerning which a Soul becomes guilty of this distemper of unconstancy.

1. That

1. That the tender of union with the Lord Jesus, do reach to every particular Soul. The Devil and the corrupt Heart, strive to maintain an uncon-
 constancy of Spirit in this determination, either keeping the Soul wavering here, not daring to resolve this blessed Truth to be a Truth; or else in suggesting strong imaginations to keep the Soul from giving firm credit to that Truth, or by keeping up objection upon objection against that precious Truth, that the Heart may not be settled upon that conclusion; but if it be settled upon it in the evening, if possible, it shall be removed in the morning.

2. That no wickedness, wretchedness, nor desperate vileness that can be imagined, is any impediment to the Lords acceptance of the Soul into union with the Lord Jesus. All the strength of reasoning, that the Machiavilian brains of Hell can produce, shall be brought to evade this Truth.

3. That it is the duty of every particular Soul, immediately and at all times, without the least delay, to give credit to the Lord, and believe that he is willing to accept that particular loveless Soul into union with Christ. These precious Truths, being that precious heavenly Chrystal glass, through which the Spiritual eye comes to discern the very Heart of God towards it in Christ; if it be possible that either the power or policy of Hell can foment that distemper in the Heart concerning this principle, to prevent the Soul from settling a full conclusion in this particular, it shall be effected.

Now this distemper prevents the Souls evidence of union with Christ from the promises, by these five several effects that it hath upon the Heart.

I. It prevents the Soul of the injoyment of a sufficient time, to discern the inward of the Lords promise, of accepting a Soul into union with Christ, even when he doth behold the promise, There are four things that a Soul must discern in a promise, in reference to the discerning of his union with Christ from the promise.

1. The Soul must discern the largeness of the extent of that promise, of acceptance of a Soul into union with Christ. He must discern the compass of the promise to be so wide as to take in his own particular Soul.

2. A Soul must discern the infinite freedom of God in the tendering of the promise, to accept the Soul into union with Christ. It must see that God requires nothing, either to prepare or dispose the Soul aright, for the injoyment of the promise, or to give the Soul a right and title to the promise.

3. The Soul must see the very bowels of the mercies of Jesus Christ in the promises. It is the sight of the readiness of the Heart of Christ, to embrace the loveless Soul, that makes the bowels of the Soul yern towards Christ again.

4. The Soul must discern the sufficiency of the promise, to assure the Soul of what it longs after. Now it being of necessity that all these must be discerned, in the promises of acceptance of the Soul into union with Christ, before the Soul can be satisfied from the promises that he is united to Jesus Christ; an hours view, or a days view, in an ordinary way I mean (unless the Spirit cast in superlative light extraordinary) will not suffice a Soul to discern all these through the promise.

II. This

II. This inconstancy in the Souls resolutions, exposes the Soul to the violence of all temptation. This will appear in three things,

1. In regard the sword of the Spirit to fight against the Temptations with, is made void. *The sword of the Spirit is the precious word of God*, Eph. 6. 17. Now the Soul being unsettled in his own determinations, concerning the truth of the Word of God to his own Soul in particular, he hath no precious use of that precious sword, the Word of God, to resist the tempter with.

2. The habit of Faith is weakned. I mean, the readiness of the disposition of Faith to be in exercise, is in a great measure hindred: The Heart is more indisposed to the exercise of Faith, by how much the seldomer Faith is drawn out to exercise.

3. Carnal reasonings of the Heart grow strong. The more any corruption prevails, the more strength it gets: Sin is never decrepit, the older it grows the stronger it grows. Thus carnal reasoning of the Heart growing old, by the constant prevailing over the Soul, it grows stronger. All these concurring, a Soul is in a dreadful measure exposed to the tyranny of all Temptations.

First, Temptations that batter down the hopes of Election.

Secondly, Temptations unto slavish fear, and dread and horreur of execution of present vengeance.

Thirdly, A Soul is exposed to the power and violence of that temptation, that it is wicked abominable presumption for his wretched Soul to have a thought that God will be willing to accept him in Christ.

III. Through that inconstancy, the Devil himself is provoked to tempt. It is observed in Scripture, that the rule the Lord gives concerning our fighting with Satan is *to resist*, and the rule concerning fighting with sin is *fleeing*, 1 Pet. 5. 9. Now it is thought it is upon this occasion the Lord gives this rule, because fleeing gives the Devil advantage, and makes him more violent in his temptations. There is nothing that gives the Devil discouragement in tempting, but a sight of an impossibility of prevailing.

IV. The inconstancy of the Soul in these resolutions and determinations, prevents the increase and growth of all the knowledge of Jesus Christ. You shall observe in 2 Pet. 3. 18. That the Holy Ghost urging the Saints to grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, he gives them an admonition to take heed they fall not from their own steadfastness; intimating thus much, while their Souls remain unstable, in receiving and giving credit to those pretious Truths of Christ that were revealed, there could be no growth in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

V. This inconstancy of the Soul, doth leave it like a lost one in a meer wilderness. It leaves it wandering in devious paths it knows not whither. When the Judgment of the Soul is thus unstable, concerning those pretious principles forenamed, the Soul is left without a Pilot, without a Compass; so that the Soul knows not how to steer its course to the pretious haven of happiness. So that this distemper must be healed, before the Soul can discern its union with Christ. Now the Spirit heals this distemper two ways.

1. By

1. By vouchsafing a clear and full manifestation to the Soul, of those pretious forenamed principles, by casting in such a high degree of divine light, as makes the truth of those forenamed conclusions out of question. It is according to the evidence the Soul receives of a truth, that the judgment is settled either more or less firmly upon it. Now the Spirit doth so manifest those pretious Truths, and so clears the Eye, as it seeth them without scruple, and then the Judgment begins to be settled with some firmness upon them.

2. The Spirit heals it by a continuation of the first manifestation of those Truths. So that a fulness of evidence of the Truth that the Soul concludes upon, remaining in the Soul, the Soul remains in a fixed settled way, cleaving and sticking to those Truths so concluded upon. Now thus you have the second work of the Spirit, in that first general effect of it upon the Heart opened, which is the removal of all impediments that hinder divine light; and you have seen what beams of the principles of darkness, and also what dark distempers are pulled out, before the Soul is fit to discern the light of Jesus Christ held forth.

Now the third work of the Spirit in this illumination, is the Spirits acting by its own power, the Divine light communicated to the Soul. It is necessary not only that a Soul receive a faculty from the Spirit, but also the acting of the faculty too: Though all acts of the renewed man, be firmly the acts of the Mind, yet they are originally the acts of the Spirit it self. So that also in this case concerning illumination, there is a necessity not only that the Soul hath a seeing Eye, but that it must

must also have the seeing of the Eye from the Spirit. Though the Soul hath an Eye disposed to see the divine light that the promise discovers, yet there must come in a power from the Spirit also, whereby the Soul may be enabled to act that very power received. As it is in the cleared Eye, it hath a fitness to see any colour, but it must be acted by the rational Soul; otherwise the inward disposition of the Soul effects nothing; that's the reason the Eye sees not in sleep, because the rational Soul is bound up as it were in its operations: Thus it is with the divine man, though influences be communicated from Jesus Christ to the Soul, that the Soul hath a spiritual Eye, rightly disposed to see spiritual objects, yet there must be also the Spirit's power to act that very Eye, that is so disposed to see the spiritual object. So that thus the Spirit comes in by a renewed power, and as it were blows up those holy sparks of divine light, that are communicated to the Soul, and makes them to work in their own proper natural way, to make them see that pretious divine light, that the promises of the Lord discover to the poor dark Soul.

Thus you see the first work, or the first effect, that the Spirit of God hath upon Souls, towards the revealing to them from the promise, that they are united to the Lord Jesus.

II. We are now to proceed to the second work of the Spirit upon Souls, *The Spirit's Irradiation*, in the evidencing to them from the promises their union with Christ, and that is the manifestation, or Irradiation of the promise it self, or of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There are two ways how the Spirit doth reveal any thing to a Soul.

The

The 1. is by infusing of divine light. The 2d. is by manifesting the object to that divine light. It is not sufficient light communicated to the faculty of discerning, that inables it to discern a thing presently, but there must be also an enlightning, and manifesting of the object to be discovered, unto that light communicated. The most acute Eye that is, of the greatest perspicuity and clearness, can discern nothing any further then the things themselves are presented to them. So that the Spirit in evidencing to the Soul from the promises, must cast as it were beams of light, some kind of holy rays from the promise it self upon the Eye, as well as light into the Eye, to discern the light that is cast upon the Eye. Thats the reason, that a Soul at one time shall discern the very Heart of Christ towards him in the promises, or in the Gospel; and at another time looking upon the same Word, the same promise, with the same diligence, and yet it not so much as giveth a sufficient ground for an imperfect hope, or an act of Faith in way of adherence, and this is from a different manifestation of this Irradiation of the Spirit unto the Soul. Now this manifestation, or Irradiation doth consist in two things.

1. The Spirit presents the Gospel, or the promises to the Soul. *We are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves*, 2 Cor. 3. 5. There must be as well an application of the object to the Eye, as an application of the Eye to the object, and yet both must be also by the Spirit of God: Therefore, *John 14. 26.* it is put as a part of the office of the comforting Spirit, or the evidencing Spirit, to bring the pretious things that Christ had spoken to his Disciples to their remembrance again.

2. The

2. The Spirit doth evidence the promise, or the Gospel, that it hath presented to the Eye. It brings it to remembrance and then opens it, and reveals the very nature and intent of it. You must conceive there is a twofold evidence of things; there is an evidence of narration, and an evidence of the matter it self: Now the Gospel is always evident in matter of narration, that is, as spoken from the mouth of God in his written Word: But the Gospel is very inevident in regard of the matter, or of the thing it self; it is an hidden mystery, so dark a riddle as cannot be found out, without the help of the Spirit it self: Now though the evidence only of narration of the Gospel, be sufficient to excite the Soul to act Faith by way of adherence and recumbency upon God, yet it is not sufficient to excite the Soul to act Faith by way of assurance. Divers things there are in the promise, or in the Gospel, that the Spirit doth evidence to the Soul, when it is revealing its union with Christ.

First, It presents and evidenceth to the Soul, the Lord Christ fully, unquestionably, and everlastingly, taking away all sin and wickedness, from every Soul that shall embrace him. You shall observe, *Rom. 8. 33, 34.* that it was through the knowledge of this, that the Faith of *Paul* took wing first, to mount above in a tryumphant way: saith he, *what shall we say to these things? What things?* Things that he had before spoken of in the beginning of the Epistle, especially *Chap. 5.* where he had made it appear clearly, *That where sin did abound, grace did much more abound,* super-

abound, abound without measure, in that Grace did triumph over sin through Jesus Christ: Now, saith he, *what shall we say to these things?* He stood in admiration at the thoughts of it, and then began to say, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods elect?* Here Faith began to triumph from the knowledge of Christs compleat removal of all sin, from every Soul that did embrace him. Now the Spirit evidenceth divers things to the Soul, for the clearing of this.

I. The Spirit makes it evident that the Lord Christ took upon him to be surety for every Soul that would embrace him. *He became the surety of the new Covenant*, Heb. 7. 22. The Spirit makes the Soul discern that Christ stept into his Father, to undertake to be bound to pay all the debts, for every Soul that shall hereafter embrace him. And herein the Spirit is wont to evidence two things concerning the suretyship of Christ.

1. That Christ undertook to be a surety of the whole Covenant for Souls. That he undertook to fulfil all that Justice or Mercy it self should require, to be fulfilled, for those Souls for whom he undertook.

2. That he became such a surety, as he undertook to pay the debt alone. Hence, *Isa. 49. 8.* he is called *the Covenant it self*: Intimating that the whole Covenant concerning taking away sin, is only between God the Father and Jesus Christ: Hence it is said, *2 Cor. 5. 19. God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.*

II. The Spirit evidenceth, that Christ as Mediatour stood in the relation of a common person, and

and took upon him to represent all the persons of those, *that should hereafter believe on him*; so that whatever satisfaction he should give to his Fathers justice in regard of sin, should be not only in stead of satisfaction to be given to the Father by the Souls themselves; but also to be done as if they were in their stead to be accounted as if they themselves had given satisfaction. This the Spirit may evidence from the promise, from some such place, as 1 Cor. 15. 48. which shews that Jesus Christ stood as a common person in stead of all those that should believe on him; as *Adam* the first man stood as a common person, to represent all those that should come out of him: Or from such a place as that, *Rom. 5. 14.* where the old *Adam* is called a Type of Jesus Christ that was to come.

The second thing the Spirit clears, is the things themselves done by Jesus Christ in those relations unto Souls, as he stood as a common person, and as the surety for those that should hereafter believe on him.

I. Therein the Spirit cometh to clear the effusion of the Blood of Christ, *the offering himself by death as a sacrifice for sin.* Thence you shall observe, the first thing *Paul* instanceth in, when he lets his Faith look upon the removing of all Sin, is Christ dying; saith he in a holy Triumph of Faith, *who shall condemn? Why? Christ hath dyed;* As if he should say, how shall either carnal reason, or conscience, or unbelief, or Justice, or Law, or Hell, or Devil, bring any accusation against our Souls, seeing Jesus Christ hath died; *he hath offered up himself by death as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin,* out of a purpose and intent fully to take away the

the sins of all those that shall believe on him: Hence the Spirit evidenceth such a place as that, *2 Cor. 5. 21. He hath made him to be sin for us, that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:* That we might have remission of sins, and that justification that God had prepared for Souls by him: Or such a place as that in *1 Tim. 1. 15. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Jesus Christ came into the World to save sinners, of whom I am chief;* That Jesus Christ undertook to be humbled so deeply, to vail the brightness of his own glory in such obscurity, as to come down from Heaven into the World, to take away the sins of poor perishing wretches. Now in the Spirits evidencing this fulness of satisfaction, it ordinarily evidenceth these things, for the satisfying Faith so fully as it may work by way of assurance, and fullness of confidence.

1. It evidenceth the full satisfaction of the Father by his death, in regard it was the Law-maker himself that was subject to the Law, and made under the power of the Law, to satisfy for the transgression of the Law.

2. In regard the brightness of the Fathers glory was debased by Christs debasement, in opposition to the debasement of the Fathers glory, that was by the transgression of the Law. What can conscience or carnal reason say more concerning the nature of sin, and the height of its merit; but only that it is a debasement of the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, it is a vailing and eclipsing of the highest Majesty of Heaven, it is a bringing a cloud as it were, over those pretious

tious unspotted beams of the Lords excellency, over the Lords high Sovereignty in commanding Souls, and over Gods holiness and equity in commanding, and therefore the merit of sin is infinite. Now the Spirit can answer by evidencing to the Death of Christ, a fulness of satisfaction, in regard it was Jesus Christ that was debased; he that was the express image of his Father, the lively pattern of his Fathers glory; and therefore the Spirit evidenceth from the Gospel that God himself speaks in a way, as if he were more than satisfied, as if Grace through Christ did triumph over sin: According to that in *Rom. 5. 17.* *If by one mans offence death reigned by one, much more they which have received abundance of Grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ.* Much more they which receive, that is, they that partake of the merit of the death of Christ, much more shall they reign: As if there were a higher degree of equity that such should reign, then there was that such Souls, that were before under sin, should die. So *Paul* speaks in *1 Tim. 1. 14.* *The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant,* the word is, *ὑπερπλεονασι*, *was more than enough.* There was more than a sufficiency of Grace through Jesus Christ, still speaking as if God had so satisfied himself, through the contrivance of the death of Christ for sin, that he had satisfaction, as it were, over and over again.

3. In that it was the Godhead it self cloathed in flesh, that gave the satisfaction. Now herein the Spirit evidenceth a fulness, and abundance of sufficiency of satisfaction, in regard there is a higher worth upon the satisfaction to the Godhead,

head, from the Godhead cloathed in the flesh; then there could be evil by offending of the Godhead that was done by man: The Godhead was only the object against whom the sin was committed; but in the satisfaction, the Godhead it self cloathed in the flesh became the subject, from whom the satisfaction is given, as well as to whom the satisfaction is given; so as the satisfaction doth in a manner; in the worth and height of it, transcend and go beyond the height of the offence, the satisfaction going from a higher subject, a more *glorious* subject, than the offence was committed by.

4. In regard of the full weight of sin, that Jesus Christ bore in his giving full satisfaction to the Father. He died under the reputation of the vilest of sinners that can be imagined, and though this was unjust in regard of men that did so repute him, yet not in regard of God who had ordained, that the iniquities of all that should embrace him, should be laid upon him: And indeed their iniquities were laid upon him to the highest; if you consider under what notion of sin he died; he died under the notion of a Traytor to his own Prince, as one that took pleasure in all kind of sin, a friend of publicans and sinners, as they reputed him: he died as a wretched blasphemer of the most high God, as one that did strike at the Throne of God, to dethrone God himself, and he died as an imposture, as a vile seducer: Nay more, he died under the notion of a Devil, yea the Prince of Devils, they say of him that by *Belzebub* the Prince of Devils, he cast out Devils: Now there in the Spirit evidenceth a fulness of satisfaction to the Father, in the Death of Christ, in regard

Christ who is holiness it self, who was the spotless Lamb without the least blemish, that he should take upon him to be accounted, and so to suffer, as the highest kind of sinner that can possibly be imagined. The Spirit can evidence here clearly, a sufficiency and fulness of satisfaction, for the sin of every Soul that shall embrace him, whatever Conscience can object against the Soul, seeing Conscience cannot object a higher kind of wickedness than was laid upon the back of Christ as a surety.

5. In regard the Lord Christ took a fulness of pleasure and contentment in bearing the Justice of the Father, executed upon him as a sinner. Justice receiveth satisfaction, when its sentence is executed fully against any transgressor, that it passeth sentence against; and thus Justice was satisfied through the Death of Christ: But there is a satisfaction as it were over and above, when the sentence of Justice pass out against a transgressor; is not only executed upon the transgressor, or him that stands in stead of the transgressor; but the sentence is received with delight, pleasure and contentment. Now thus Jesus Christ through his Death gave fulness of satisfaction, in that it was the pleasure of his Soul to bear the determined will of his Father for sinners in this way: saith he, *Psal. 40. 8. Lo I came to do thy will, my God,* expressing the readines and willingness of his Heart to bear that will of his Father for sinners: Nay so great was his delight in bearing the sentence of Justice pass upon him, as he stood as a transgressor and sinner, that he saith himself *he was even straitened till it be accomplished, Luke 22. 50.*

Now

Now as the Spirit evidenceth by the effusion of Christ's Blood, a satisfaction given to the Father : So secondly, it evidenceth the suitability of the satisfaction, and that in two things.

1. In regard of the things suffered by Christ to give satisfaction : Those things every way suitable to what Justice could require, from the Soul it self, in regard of his sin. Two things sin declareth the Soul hath merited to suffer for ever.

First, The Death of the Body wherein sin is acted and committed.

Secondly, The Death of the Soul it self, in the separation of it from God, which was the chief actor in the transgression of the Law. Now the Spirit evidences the Death of Christ a suitable satisfaction in regard of the things suffered by Christ.

First, In regard the humane Body died, that stood in the stead of those that had been the transgressors of the Law : he took upon him flesh, and so died for sin in the flesh, in the same nature, in the same kind of Body that sin was acted in.

Secondly, In that there was a separation of the Soul of Christ from enjoyment of communion with his Father : as appears, *Matth. 27. 46. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?* That is, why hast thou deprived me of communion with thee ? And though indeed the separation was not eternal, yet in regard of the person bearing the separation, it was equivalent to an eternal separation : One moment of separation was as great an evil inflicted upon such a person, as an eternal separation could have been to have been

inflicted upon a poor finite Creature.

2. The Spirit evidenceth the suitability of satisfaction to the Father, in regard of the sins themselves laid to the charge of Christ, in his suffering what Justice could require should be suffered by the transgressor; and that both in the kind of sin, and also in the degree of sin, yea and also in the circumstance of sin too. That which was equivalent to all kind of sin; was imputed to Christ to be suffered, that should have been suffered by transgressors: Apostacy from God was imputed to him, by being imputed to be a Devil: Enmity to God in the highest degree was imputed to him, in that he was imputed the Prince of Devils: All kind of fighting against God was imputed to him, in that he was imputed a Blasphemer, and a striver to sit down in the Throne of God himself, and an impostor and deceiver. So that no kind of sin, that Conscience can object against the Soul, but the Spirit can and doth evidence at such a time was imputed to Christ, and Christ suffered for such a sin that was equivalent to that kind of sin.

II. In the Spirits evidencing the Lord Christ to have fully and everlastingly taken away all the wickedness of what kind soever from every Soul that shall embrace him, it evidenceth the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead. This is clear, *Rom. 8. 34. It is Christ that died, yet rather than it rise again.* In this the Spirit evidenceth three things to the Soul.

1. It evidenceth the Fathers acknowledgment of his own satisfaction for the sins of all the persons that should ever embrace Christ, and believe on him.

him. The Spirit evidenceth to the Soul, *Christ having once taken upon him, as a surety, to bear the transgressions of all that should believe on him; having entred into Bond to pay all their debts, and suffered himself to be arrested by the Justice of God; yea to be carried to the prison of the Grave by the Hand of Justice for those transgressions, he must never have come out till he had paid the uttermost farthing: And that's the reason that in 1 Cor. 15. 14. the Apostle tells them, That their Faith is vain, and their Preaching of Christ is vain, unless Christ be risen: Whence the Apostle noteth, That though the Death of Jesus Christ, was the matter of satisfaction to the Justice of the Father, for the Justifying of all the persons that Christ sustained; yet there is no evidence unto Faith, that God the Father is satisfied, for those transgressions by the Death of Christ, unless Christ be risen.*

2. The Spirit evidenceth to the Soul Christs own triumphant victory over sin, and all the concomitants and consequents of sin. Now therein the Spirit evidenceth Christs removal of all kind of sin, from every Soul that shall hereafter embrace him, in regard he hath now captivated sin, he hath got sin under his own power, to trample under his Feet, and to do with as he please; he hath taken sin and tied it to his Chariot wheel, as the word imports.

3. The Spirit doth evidence in and from the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, as he was a surety, that the Lord doth account his acquittance given to Jesus Christ for sin, that was charged upon him, to be an acquittance of all those

that ever should embrace Christ through believing; and also that Christ in receiving that acquittance from God, did receive it in the room, and in the stead of all that ever should embrace him. And thence the Spirit evidenceth to the Soul, that the Scripture attributes unto every believer, a participation of the resurrection of Christ, yea that it attributes to them a Co-resurrection with Christ, *Col. 2. 13. You being dead in your sins, hath he quickned together with him*; that is, hath made you partakers of the vertue of his resurrection, and raised you with himself; and *vers. 14. Blotting out the hand writing of Ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross*; that is, Justifying our Souls from all that ever Sin, Conscience, the Law, or the Devil could bring against us.

III. The Spirit evidenceth to the Soul, the Ascension of Jesus Christ to the right Hand of the Father, as he was a surety, and as he did represent sinners that should receive him to be their Mediator. Thus *Rom. 8. 34. Paul* through the Spirits manifestation of Jesus Christ at the right Hand of the Father, had such a full evidence, as he could make a challenge to the Law, and to Sin, and Hell, and the Devil, to bring all their accusations, and see if they could lay any thing to his charge: *Who shall condemn?* saith he, *Jesus Christ is gone to the right Hand of the Father*. Now from Christ's Ascension to the right Hand of the Father, the Spirit is wont to evidence these four things.

1. That the Lord Christ as a surety for all sinners, that should embrace him as their Mediator, hath

hath now received an acknowledgment in Heaven, that he hath fully taken away all the sins of all that ever so receive him. The Spirit brings to the Souls remembrance what welcom, as it were, Jesus Christ had into Heaven: It shews the Soul from such a place as that, *Psal. 110. 1.* The Father said to Christ when he came into Heaven, *Well done thou obedient Son, sit thou down at my right Hand.* There are two things observable in that.

First, In that welcom given by the Father, there is an evidence that the Father acknowledgeth the work by Christ to be fully done. Sitting imports a rest after a work fulfilled, *Heb. 10. 1.*

Secondly, The Spirit evidenceth that high favour, that Jesus Christ had in Heaven, as he was a surety for those sinners that should embrace him to be their Mediator, *Heb. 1. 5.*

2. The Spirit evidenceth from Christs Ascension, that he as a surety for all those sinners that should embrace him, hath fully prepared Heaven. Now this Spirit evidenceth by two things.

First, That the very end of the Ascension of Jesus Christ into Heaven, to sit at the right Hand of the Father, was to prepare places in Heaven for all that should embrace him, *John 14. 2.*

Secondly, That Jesus Christ is gone to Heaven as a fore-runner of those that should embrace him, *Heb. 6. 20.* Now a fore-runner implys many followers.

3. The Spirit evidenceth from Christs Ascension, that he hath a Sovereignty, and Supremacy of all power committed to him. This Christ himself hints, *Matth. 26. 64.* *Hereafter shall you see the Son*

of man sit at the right Hand of power. That is, exalted in the highest power. So *Eph. 1. 20, 21.* And thence in two things the Spirit evidenceth the Lord Christs taking away all kind of sin from the Soul.

First, The Spirit evidenceth that Christ hath such a supremacy of power over all things, that it is impossible that the power of sins guilt should prevail against any for whom Jesus Christ hath undertaken, seeing he hath the keys of Hell and of Death, and hath all things under his Feet in a vassalage to him.

Secondly, The Spirit evidenceth to this supremacy of Christ as Mediator, that the Lord was well pleased with him as a surety, for such Souls as should embrace him.

4. From the ascension of Jesus Christ to the right Hand of God, the Spirit evidenceth that the Lord Christ had the highest authority of Judgment committed to him. Sitting is the posture of Judges, *Prou. 20. 8.* and *John 5. 21, 22.* *The Father hath committed all Judgement unto the Son.* Thence in *Eph. 1. 21, 22.* he is said to have all things put under his Feet, and was given to be Head of all things to the Church. Now from hence the Spirit evidenceth by two things, the Lords full compleat taking away all sin, from every Soul that shall embrace him.

First, In that no Judgment of condemnation can be passed upon such a Soul, but what Judgment Christ as surety passeth, seeing all Judgement was committed to him as the Son, and as Mediator. And what can be more sure than that all sin and guilt shall be compleatly removed, seeing the Son him-

himself that is the surety for Souls, must pass the Judgment concerning all guilt that must be imputed to lie upon Souls.

Secondly, In that no Judgment of condemnation or guilt, can pass against those Souls that shall embrace him as their Mediator, but what shall pass against themselves. The Spirit manifests that whoever embraces Christ, must be interested in every sentence of Judgment that pass out; because the Judgment that Christ passeth as he is the surety of Souls, and represents them; it must pass out in their names, even with their votes: So that no Judgment of condemnation for guilt can pass out against them without their joynt vote and consent.

IV. The Spirit evidenceth the intercession of Jesus Christ with the Father, for all those Souls that shall embrace him. Therefore in *Rom. 8. 34.* the Apostle proceeds to that step, *Who shall condemn? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, that sitteth at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* Now in the Spirits manifesting this, it doth manifest divers things for the satisfying of the Soul, for the full and everlasting taking away all sins by Christ, for every Soul that shall embrace him.

1. In the Spirits evidencing the intercession of Christ for sinners with the Father, it doth evidence the Lord Christ to be a Son to the Father, and to plead as a Son with the Father for sinners. This you shall see *Heb. 7. 25.* compared with *vers. 28.* he tells you, *he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him;* and *vers. 28.* he puts an emphasis upon it, *that he was a Son.* This the Spirit com-

commonly reveals to Souls in drawing them to Faith of assurance, that Jesus Christ as the natural Son of God intercedeth in Heaven for Souls. Now from thence there are two evidences given to a Soul, of Christs fully taking away sin from every Soul that shall embrace him.

First, The Spirit evidenceth, that it is impossible that any guilt whatever should cleave to the Soul, in regard the Son can ask nothing but what the Father will. *The Father and I am one*, saith Christ; so their wills are one, and their thoughts and dispositions one.

Secondly, The Spirit evidenceth^{eth} that it is impossible for the pleading of Jesus Christ to be denied. There is such a complacency, and acquiescence of ^edelight ~~of~~ the Father in Jesus Christ, that the Father hath no more power to deny what the Lord Christ pleadeth for, then he hath power to deny himself, and that is impossible.

2. The Spirit evidenceth^{eth} the intercession of Christ, doth evidence that the Lord Christ pleads with the Father as an obedient Son to his Fathers will. Now from this the Holy Ghost evidenceth in two things, the full, compleat, everlasting taking away of sin from every Soul that shall embrace him.

First, The Spirit evidenceth that there is an obligation upon the Father, to accept his Sons in-treaty for poor sinners.

Secondly, The Spirit evidenceth, that it was the fulfilling the same will of the Father that Jesus Christ pleaded for, when he pleaded for the pardon of the sins of those that embrace him. It was his Fathers design originally out of his love

to

to poor lost wretches, to take away their sins, only it was his purpose to effect it through Jesus Christ, doing and satisfying his Justice for sin: So that Jesus Christ in yielding obedience unto his Father unto Death, did it to effect the end of his Father in the pardon of the sins of lost sinners.

3. The Spirit evidenceth in this intercession of Christ, that though he died as a common person, and rose as a common person; yet he doth not intercede as a common person, not in their steads, but for them. That you shall observe *Heb. 7. comparing vers. 22. with vers. 25. He was made the surety of the new Covenant, vers. 22.* And then he tells you, *He is able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him.* There are two things the Spirit evidenceth in that.

First, It evidenceth that he pleaded as a surety appointed by his Father for Souls: According to *Heb. 5. 5.* he did not glorifie himself to be made an high Priest, but he that said unto him, *Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.* His Father ordained him to the office of an high Priest, which contains the suretiship.

Secondly, He pleads as a surety to his Father to accomplish the full salvation of Souls through his pleading. The Father ordained him *to be a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek*; hence he, *as an high Priest, is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.* Then the Spirit reveals the things done by Christ in his intercession as a surety. Two things there the Spirit reveals.

First, That by Christs intercession as a surety for Souls, there is a vertual continuation of the
sacri-

sacrifice of the Blood of Christ, for the satisfaction of the Fathers Justice. Now from thence the Spirit brings in full evidence for taking away all sin, from every Soul that shall embrace Christ, in regard the satisfaction is continued in the Fathers Eye. Thence it is observable, *Heb. 8.* comparing *vers. 2, 3.* with *vers. 12.* That the Apostle from the meditation of the continued Priesthood of Jesus Christ, ministring in Heaven, doth conclude the firmness and stability of the new Covenant, there mentioned in the latter end of the Chapter, and concludes from thence Gods remembrance of sins and Iniquities no more.

Secondly, The Spirit evidenceth, that through Christs interceding as a surety, there is a continual suing out of the benefit of the satisfaction of the Father by his death, for sinful Souls according to their necessities. Hence you may observe in *1 John 2. 1.* That the Apostle directs those believers that should sin, *to be acting of Faith upon Jesus Christ,* as he was a present advocate with the Father.

4. The Spirit manifests to the Soul's Faith, from that beam of light in the Gospel, that the Lord hath everlastingly removed all sin from all that shall embrace him; That the Lord Christ in his intercession with the Father, for the perfect Salvation of those that shall embrace him, doth plead for nothing but what the Father himself, and of himself, is as willing to give to those Souls, as Jesus Christ is willing to ask it at his Fathers Hand. Therefore in *Isa. 53. 10.* The whole work of Salvation that Jesus Christ was to accomplish for Souls, is called nothing else but the Fathers pleasure.

sure; *The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his Hands*: Now this the Spirit clears up convincingly and satisfyingly, that the Father is altogether ready, yea that the Fathers bowels do as much yern after the full Salvation of those that embrace the Lord Jesus, as the bowels of Christ himself, who is the Head of those Souls. Now the Spirit may, and doth sometimes evidence this parallel willingness of the Father in these three things.

First, The Spirit clears it that an amity and oneness comprehends all kind of near relation in it, and manifests that those that embrace Christ, are admitted into unity with the Father himself, to be one with the Father. According to that in *John 17: 21, 22. That they may be one, as thou and I are one, and that they may be one in us, as thou Father art in me and I in thee.*

Secondly, The Spirit may evidence, that the relation between the Father and Souls, is the very foundation of all relation between Christ and those Souls. And therefore there must needs be as great willingness in the Father, to accept Christs pleading for perfect Salvation, as there is in Christ to plead for it: So that though Christ have those that embrace him, ingraven as it were upon his Heart, yet it was there ingraven by the Hand of his Fathers love, *John 17: 6. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me*: They were made mine because they were first thine.

Thirdly, The Spirit may manifest here, that the willingness of Christ to plead for them, proceeds from the willingness of the Father that he should so plead, that he should become an intercessor. Christ in all his pleadings is but a Priest, which

which Priesthood is but an office to which God the Father had ordained him, *Heb. 5. 5.*

5. The Spirit evidenceth that Christ in his intercession with the Father, for the perfect Salvation of those Souls that shall embrace him, pleads for nothing but what he hath power to command to be effected. As in *Psal. 2. 6, 7.* *He hath set his King upon the holy hill;* that is, as he that God the Father hath appointed in his own stead and room as Mediator, to dispence all things communicable, to dispose of all according to his will, only God the Father will be acknowledged as a Father to him, and he to be a Son; therefore the Lord saith in the next verse, *Ask of me, and I will give thee;* it shall be by intercession: yet *John 5. 22.* *All judgment is committed to the Son* still, and he hath the power and command of all: Therefore you shall read, *John 17. 24.* in that prayer that is the pattern of his intercession in Heaven for Souls; he prays thus, *Father I will that those that thou hast given me be with me;* he prays as it were in a commanding way.

There is a Second beam of the same Spiritual Heavenly light, *Divine Light*, that the Spirit doth necessarily also cause to shine resplendently before the enlightened Souls Eye, before Faith can receive such full assurance, as to work by way of fulness of confidence and assurance, and that's this, The Spirit doth evidence from the Gospel, or from the promise, *The Lord Christs unquestionable willingness to embrace every poor lost sinner that is willing to embrace him.* Indeed the Lord Christ doth primarily embrace lost sinners into the bosom of his love,

love, and joyns them everlastingly to himself, yea and compleats the relative union, between himself and their Souls whilst they are meer patients, altogether under an impossibility of any such Spiritual action, or so much as any concurrence with the Lord Jesus, in the compleating of the relative union: But this union remains invisible till by the vertue of this passive, or this relative union, the dead Soul is inabled by actual believing, actively to close in union with the Lord Jesus, and to embrace him to be one with him. And therefore to the least degree of the knowledge of a Souls union with Christ, of necessity the Spirit must present the Lord Christ with his pretious everlasting arms of love, to embrace such loveless sinners as will embrace him, that thereby the Soul may be satisfied concerning the object that he believeth, and may close with the Lord Christ propounded, and make application of that union tendred in the Lord Jesus with himself. Now for the Spirit evidencing this to the Soul satisfyingly, and to make the Soul in believing to triumph, the Spirit is wont to evidence divers particulars.

1. The Spirit is wont to evidence the consent and agreement of the blessed Trinity from all eternity, in that glorious design of the Lord Jesus entertaining every lost despicable sinner that will embrace him.

I. The Spirit reveals the consent of God the Father to that glorious design, and that in divers particulars.

1. In that God the Father imposed a command upon the Lord Jesus to embrace every such despicable lost sinner, that would give him ^entertainment

tainment as his Mediator. This you shall see in John 6. 37, 38. *whoever cometh unto me, saith Christ, I will in no wise cast him out; that is, whoever receiveth me through believing, I will in no wise reject him or cast him off, or refuse to be a Mediator between God and him: I will in no wise cast him out, that is, under no respect, no notion or consideration that can be imagined.* Now observe what's the reason of this, you shall see *vers. 38. For I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me; and this is the Father's will, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing; that is, of all that he should draw to believe on me, I should lose none, but should raise him up at the last day; and this is the will of him that sent me, that he that seeth the Son and believeth on him, should have everlasting life.* So John 10. 15, to 18.

2. The Spirit reveals God the Father's infusion of a disposition of love into the Heart of Jesus Christ, purposely that he might embrace every lost sinner, that would entertain him as his Mediator. Saith he, *Psal. 40. 7, 8. Lo I come to do thy will, O my God, thy Law is within my Heart,* that is, a disposition to yield obedience to this thy will, and in effect it was a disposition of love; the Law of being a Mediator was nothing but a Law of love, and this Law was written in the Heart by God the Father.

3. That the Father prepared a suitable body for the second person in Trinity to become Mediator in, *Heb. 10. 4. A body hast thou prepared me;* that is, thou hast prepared me a Body fit to be offered up for sin; that is, fit to become a ready willing sacrifice

sacrifice for poor lost sinners, that I might redeem them.

4. In that God the Father did engage the Lord Jesus by his own love to him, to love every such lost undone sinner as should embrace him. This you shall see if you compare *John* 10. 17, 18, with *John* 15. 10. Saith Christ, *therefore doth my father love me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again:* And saith Christ to his Disciples, *If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Fathers Commandments and abide in his love:* Hence Christ intimateth, not only that his Father loved him, for his undertaking that work of mercy and pitty to poor lost undone sinners, but that his Father did lay the engagement of his love upon him; So that as he respects his Fathers love, and desires the continuance of it to him, so he should be pittifull to every lost sinner that embraceth him.

II. The consent of the Son the Lord Jesus himself, is revealed by the Spirit for the clearing of this. And that the Spirit may and doth reveal in two things.

1. In the free ready consent of the Lord Jesus, to the blessed will of his Father. The Lord Christ made no objection against the blessed command, though take it in all the latitude of it, it was the hardest command that ever was imposed upon any creature in heaven or earth, a command to spend his dearest innocent blood, a command to become a curse, a command to deprive himself of the ravishing vision of his Fathers face, yet this command he never stuck at, but saith, in the Volumn of the Book it is writtē, *Lo I come to do thy will.*

2. In that he took infinite delight in the yielding obedience to this his Fathers will, *Psal.* 40. 8. *I delight to do thy will, O my God;* He took pleasure in
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it, and was straightned in his Spirit till it was accomplished.

III. The Spirit reveals the consent of the blessed Spirit, proceeding both from God the Father and God the Son in this blessed design. And that's in this, that the spirit freely, and in the very fulness of it, took up his habitation in the Lord Christ, thus constituted to be Mediator, to fill him with grace, and love and pitty, for the accomplishment of this blessed work of gathering in lost sinners into union with himself. This the Spirit reveals in two things.

1. In the manner or form of the Spirit descending down upon Christ. *Luke 3. 22.* It came down in the shape of a Dove. to shew it came on purpose to furnish the Mediator with mercy and pitty to poor despicable loveless sinners, that he might be nothing but a lump of love wrapped up in flesh.

2. The Spirit reveals the end for which the Spirit was thus poured out upon him in the fulness of it. The end is revealed, *Isa. 61. 1, 2, 3.* *To preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted (that is, poor captivated enslaved souls, under the power of their hellish enemy) and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, that is, deliverance of them that are held fast in the chains of darkness, under the power of the Prince of darkness) to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.*

Secondly, The Spirit reveals the suitable Office, that is established upon the Lord Christ, purposely to engage him to shew mercy and pitty to every lost sinner that should embrace him. The Spirit manifests that he is ordained by God the father to be an High Priest, to sacrifice for the sins of the people. Here the Spirit reveals two things.

1. That

1. That the qualifications that God looks upon in Christ, in ordaining him to be the High-Priest, were suitable dispositions to shew mercy and pitty to poor undone Sinners. This you shall find in *Heb. 3. 2.* *He can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.* Therefore *Heb. 4. 25.* That's made a special qualification in Christ as High Priest, that he was one who had a fellow feeling of those that he was High Priest to, that he had a sweet sympathy rolling in his bowels to them, under the infirmity of Sin and misery.

2. The Spirit reveals that the end of that Office of the Priest-hood that was established upon him, was to shew mercy to poor despicable undone sinners. You shall see in *Heb. 5. 1.* what are the ends of an High Priest;

First, he is ordained to come to the Mercy-seat for man, that is, for the good of poor miserable men.

Secondly, that he might offer gifts and sacrifice for sins, that he might pacifie the angry God, that was incensed against sinners, that he might reconcile perishing, lost, undone sinners to God the father.

Thirdly, For evidencing that unquestionable willingness of the Lord Jesus, to accept every sinner that will embrace him: the spirit reveals the exact and exquisite care, the Lord Jesus hath taken to reveal himself, to prevail with poor undone sinners to gather them into union with himself. This the spirit evidenceth in five things.

1. By revealing the provision of Officers that Jesus Christ hath made, to allure and beseech souls to accept the Lord Christ to be one with them. After Christ was gone into heaven, and had left pleading with undone sinners with his own blessed lips, you

see *Eph. 4. 11, 12.* he sends out others in his own room, such as might be Embassadors representing his own person, to beseech and pray undone sinners to accept of reconciliation with the father through their union with him.

2. By revealing that the Lord Christ took care to furnish such as he sent forth, to allure undone sinners into union with him, with a suitable spirit for that work. Therefore before Jesus Christ would go to his father, *John 20. 22.* he goes to his Disciples and giveth them a Commission to allure souls into union with himself, and when he had given them the Commission, he breathed on them, and said, *Receive ye the holy spirit.*

3. By revealing the Lords assimilating those whom he betrusts, to reveal himself to lost sinners. Not only in furnishing them with abilities of the spirit; but also in conforming them in their very dispositions unto his own likeness, he conveyed his own bowels of mercy and pity and compassion into them, that their bowels might yearn towards the gathering lost sinners into communion with him, as the bowels of Jesus Christ himself yearned. This you shall see, *Eph. 1. 8.* That *Paul* tells them he longed after them all in the bowels of Jesus Christ; That is, I longed after your perfection in union and communion with Christ, in the bowels that Jesus Christ hath infused into me, as some interpret it: But indeed the interpretation may rather be of Jesus Christ, in the same bowels that Jesus Christ longed after souls, in the same kind of pity and compassion, that Jesus Christ had working in his bosom towards undone sinners.

4. By

4. By revealing the Lord Jesus chusing out some desperate sinners, on purpose to be as patterns of love before the eyes of other lost sinners, that he would take into union with himself. This is declared by the spirit, *1 Tim.* 1. 15, 16. to be the end of God to shew mercy to that blasphemer, that persecuter, that injurious one to Jesus Christ, that he might shew forth a pattern to other sinners that should hereafter believe on him.

5. By revealing the Lord Christ to have improved all his interest, in those that are his own, to engage them to help forward the work, in gathering lost sinners into union with him. As in *John* 21. 15, 16, 17. when Jesus Christ was to leave the earth, and would engage *Peter* to do some great thing for him, he engaged him to reveal himself to poor miserable souls; that's under the term or notion here of feeding his Lambs and Sheep.

IV. For the evidencing the willingness of the Lord Christ to accept into union every loveless sinner that will embrace him, the spirit reveals the absolute engagement of Christ, by his own joy, and by his own glory that is supernatural, to embrace every loveless sinner that is willing to entertain him. The Lord Christ considered as head to a mystical body, may be said to be imperfect, till all sinners that shall ever belong to him be gathered in; And Jesus Christ even wants his Joy and Glory that he shall enjoy as a Mediator, so long as there is but one lost sinner belonging to that mystical body to be gathered in: Therefore it is impossible for Jesus Christ to reject one sinner that shall embrace him, unless he will reject himself.

There is a third beam of divine light, and that is, The insatiable longing and thirsting of the Lord Jesus, to embrace every soul into union that would be united to him. The spirit is leading the soul from one degree of satisfaction to his faith, to another, till at last he cometh to give a full ground of satisfaction to the soul, to make his union with Christ appear, that faith hath ground not only of confidence but of triumph. Now the spirit doth evidence this unto the soul for his satisfaction two ways.

First, The spirit reveals the grounds from whence the longings of Jesus Christ after union with the soul do proceed.

Secondly, The spirit reveals the expression of those longings of Jesus Christ by himself.

First, The spirit reveals the ground whence those longings proceed.

1. The spirit evidenceth the near alliance, and precious relations, that Jesus Christ accounts himself to have, unto all those lost Sinners that long after union with him, or that ever shall be brought into union with him.

1. The Spirit reveals, that the Lord Christ accounts all those lost Souls his Brethren. Therefore Christ in *John 20. 17.* when he sends Mary to tell the blessed news of his resurrection to his Disciples, saith he, *Go tell my brethren, that I ascend unto my father and your father, to my God and your God.* [*Go tell my brethren.*] That is, those that are joynt adopted ones by my father, as my brethren, the joynt beloved ones, as I am beloved of the father as Mediator. Now from hence the spirit manifests, that

that the soul of Christ cannot but long after union with all those souls, that will embrace him into union.

2. The spirit reveals that the Lord Christ accounts all those that shall embrace him to be as his Spouse, as those that are to be married to him. Jesus Christ hath infinite longings after himself and his own glory, and then *Eph. 2. 28. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself*, therefore Jesus Christ doth but love himself, and his own glory, in desiring the union of souls with himself, and therefore his longings cannot be less than infinite and incomprehensible.

3. The spirit evidenceth, that Jesus Christ accounts all souls that shall embrace him, as his own members, without which he is not compleat as Mediator. The fulness of Christ mysticall is the Church, and he accounts not himself perfect till all his mysticall body be gathered to him. Now hence the spirit manifests infinite longings in the bosom of Jesus Christ, after every soul that would be one with him, as he longs after his own good.

4. The spirit reveals that the Lord Christ accounts every soul that will embrace him to be a part of his own glory. Christ accounts not his own glory to be full, till all those lost souls that ever shall embrace him, be perfectly and compleatly joyned to him. Now hence the spirit manifests, that there cannot but be infinite longings in the bosom of Jesus Christ, after the union of such souls with himself, as would have union with him, or are willing to embrace him, seeing he cannot but infinitely long after the perfection of his own glory; And seeing he cannot long after his own glory in the perfection of it, but he must long after the union of every lost soul that will embrace him into union with himself.

2. The spirit also remembers the soul of those dreadful sufferings of Jesus Christ, for all those souls that ever shall embrace him. Now from thence the spirit evidenceth three ways, that there cannot but be such longings of Christ.

1. That the love of Christ to those souls is augmented. There is no more prevailing argument of love, than suffering evil for the beloved one.

2. The spirit evidenceth from thence, that Jesus Christ hath a nearer interest in them. The propriety of Christ is as well augmented by his sufferings as his love. Therefore saith the Apostle 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. *Ye are not your own, why? for ye are bought with a price.*

3. The spirit reveals that there is a higher degree of Joy in the bosom of Christ, in the obtaining of union with them. Therefore, *Isa. 53. 11.* Christ is said, *to see of the travel of his soul, and to be satisfied.* That is, he shall see souls gathered in to him as the fruit of all his sufferings, and this shall satisfy him. Now from hence the spirit reveals the unsatisfiable longings of Christ, after the union of those souls that shall embrace him.

3. The spirit reveals the sensibleness of the Lord Christ of his own duty, as he is Mediator, to gather such lost souls as will embrace him, into union with him. This you may find *John 10. 15, 16.* Saith Christ, *I have other sheep which are not of this fold, them also I must bring in:* As if Christ should have said, there is necessity, I am engaged by duty to my father, in respect of the command my father laid upon me, to gather those lost souls into union with me.

4. The spirit reveals, that it is onely suitable to the nature of Jesus Christ, to be gathering lost undone Sinners into union with him. His nature is nothing but an abstract or quintessence of love, as Mediator, and therefore it is only natural to him to be pouring out of his love into empty souls.

Secondly, the spirit evidenceth the expressions of those longings of Jesus Christ by himself.

I. The spirit presents Jesus Christ seeking after such lost sinners, to gather them into union with him, when their backs are altogether turned upon him, and when they have altogether forgotten him. This spirit causeth the soul to hear from the mouth of God himself, *Luke 19. 10. The Son of man is come to seek and save that which is lost. It is my office, saith Christ, for which I came down from heaven.*

II. The spirit manifests the Lord Christs strong compassionate cries of love after such souls, to accept of a blessed union and communion with himself. This the spirit causeth the soul to hear, *Rev. 22. 17. Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him come, and take of the water of life freely. So Isa. 55. 1, 2. Ho every one that is in any want, in any necessity, any poor thirsty soul, come ye, saith he, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Here the spirit causeth the soul,*

1. To discern the loud cry of Jesus Christ after such poor, dead, sluggish souls to embrace them.

2. The spirit causeth the soul to see the redoubling of his cry and call. *Come ye, saith Christ, yea again, come, and again, come, as if his bowels yearned.*

3. The

3. The spirit lets the soul see, his propounding all the precious arguments, that can possibly be imagined, to prevail with souls. Come, saith Christ, buy Wine and Milk, take the most precious soul-ravishing comforts, the sweetest Cordials to thy poor needy fainting soul.

III. The spirit reveals the low condescension of Jesus Christ to become an intreater, a beseecher of souls to accept of that union propounded. According to 2. Cor. 5. 20. *We are Embassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christs stead be reconciled to God, that is, be ye one with God.*

IV. The spirit reveals that the Lord Christ hath put his own Spirit in commission for that end, to make all these longings of his evident to the soul, and these expressions of his longings in his Cries and Intreaties, effectual upon souls. The spirit reveals to the soul, the strength of the desires of Jesus Christ, to be so superlative, as to take care least after all the expressions of his longings, the soul should still remain unconquered, and therefore he adds as it were a supplement to all his former desires of union with him, he adds his own spirit to stand as a constant Officer for that end, to convince the soul of his longings that they should have union with him. Therefore he sends the comforter, *John 16. 7.*

V. The spirit reveals the Lords Tender, Pittiful, Compassionate discovery of the dreadful danger of neglect of union with him. According to that in *John 3. 17, 18. God sent not his Son into the World to condemn, but that the World through him might be saved: I tell you souls, saith Christ, the very intention of*

of my Father in sending me, is not to augment your Sins, that your condemnation should be augmented, but it is his intention that you might be saved: And then v. 18. he reveals to them the desperate state of them that neglect this Salvation that he brings, *He that believeth not, is condemned already.*

VI. The Spirit reveals that the Lord waits to be gracious, and even waits as it were the leisure of poor lost undone souls, to accept of that blessed union tendered. The spirit presents the Lord Jesus standing at the door of hearts and knocking, till his head is wet with the dew, and his locks with the drops of the night, waiting for the souls accepting of that blessed union with himself that he tenders.

There is a fourth beam of divine light the spirit causeth further to sparkle forth from the Gospel in this work of Irradiation, or manifestation of it, and that is this. *The absolute independency of this willingness of Jesus Christ to accept souls into union, upon any thing in the Souls whom he is thus willing to accept, and after union with him his soul thus longs.* There can be no act of Faith by way of fulness of confidence or assurance, till there be such a clear apprehension of the acceptance of the particular soul into union with the Lord Jesus, that all matter of fear vanisheth, and all occasion of doubt is taken away, by the clearness of that light that the spirit casts into the understanding, and by the clear satisfaction it gives the soul concerning his acceptance by Jesus Christ, to be one with him. Therefore the spirit in respect to those Multitudes of fears,

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fears, that commonly arise in souls, concerning the insurablencess of themselves to be taken into union with Christ, for the taking away those occasions of fear, doth reveal to the soul that the willingness of the Lord Jesus to accept it into union, and the longings of Jesus Christ after union with souls, hath not the least dependance upon any thing in the soul it self, whence he accepts it into union. Now for the evidencing of this, the spirit may and doth evidence these three things to the soul.

I. The spirit evidenceth the impossibility of the will of the glorious Deity, to be moved by any thing without it self, in any of the motions of his love whatever. So that thence the spirit evidenceth to the soul, that it were a denying of the glory of the God-head, to conceive that God should look out of himself for any argument, any motive, any incentive, that should either excite or incline the divine will to any motions of love whatever to wards any creature.

II. The spirit evidenceth the absolute will of the Father alone, to be the first principle, and also the only cause of admission of souls into union and communion with the Lord Jesus. So that both the purpose of God to accept souls into union, and also the execution of that his purpose, do depend only upon the Lords bare will, and good pleasure. According to that in *Eph. 1. 5, 6*, compared with *ver. 9.*

III. The spirit evidenceth the Lord Christs willingness to accept of souls into union, to be only done through the Commission that he received, from the good pleasure of his Fathers will

will concerning such souls. According to that in *John 6. 37, 38.* When he saith he would reject no one soul in no wise, under no consideration whatever; he gives this reason, for *I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*

There is a fifth beam of light that the spirit causeth to shine forth from the Gospel, and that is, The admirable and incomprehensible fulness of all perfection of love and mercy, that is comprehended in this tender of union with the Lord Christ, to every particular Soul that will accept it. Notwithstanding those former beams of divine light, there is a two fold necessity for the Spirit to cause this beam of divine light also to sparkle before the souls eyes.

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light.*

I. That there may be a fulness of sufficiency to produce acts of Faith in a soul, by way of fulness of confidence and assurance. And in this regard, there is a necessity of the spirits casting this beam of light also before the souls eyes, to open the incomprehensible perfection of all kind of love, that the soul soul can imagine he should have the least necessity of.

II. To excite and quicken the affections to more enlarged operations or workings. Though there hath been a former apprehension of the infinite perfection of love, in the tender of the union, yet there is no answerable working of affection towards the union, unless there be that very actual Vision: Now when the operation of the
affection

affections towards the union tendered are but small, then the souls assurance of its acting of Faith, by way of fulness of confidence of its union with Christ, is but in a small degree. Therefore it is in this respect, that the spirit doth manifest the absolute, compleat, incomprehensible perfection of love that is included in the tender of union. And this the spirit doth in divers particulars.

1. The spirit reveals the Lords tender of passing over himself, and all that is in himself, wholly unto souls through this union with Christ. For the evidencing this, the spirit only brings to remembrance, the sum of all the promises, according to the Lords own abstract and Compendium that he hath made of them; And that is this, That God hath said he will be the souls God in Christ. Here are two particulars included under this one depth.

First, The spirit manifests that the highest interest that is possible to make a soul capable of, in the infinite perfection of God himself, is offered to be passed over to the soul in the tender of union.

Secondly, The spirit manifests that the Lord offers in this tender of union to interest the soul in himself, with such an interest as should be most suitable, for the fullest communication of himself to the soul, that it shall be as proper and peculiar for God to love the soul, as it should be proper to the nature of God to be loving himself.

2. The spirit reveals that the Lord hath laid the highest obligation upon himself, to be the souls own in all that he is, in his passing over himself unto the soul through that union with Christ. This the spirit manifests

manifests by bringing to remembrance the Lords asseverations, and protestations, and highest oath that he adds unto that his word, that declares him to pass over himself unto souls through their union with Christ. *Hebr. 6. 13.*

3. The spirit reveals the Lords establishing the transactions of himself, and all that is in himself over to the soul, through its union with Christ, upon his own will alone, on purpose that there might be a fulness of all love contained in him. Three particular ends the spirit may bring to the Souls remembrance for the clearing of this.

First, That there might be no possibility of an alteration of that perfect love of his to a soul through union with Christ, by any Power or Possibility of the soul. The Holy Ghost affirms *Rom. 11. 9.* The Lords Election of love to be meerly established upon his own will, for that end that the Election might stand being *not of Works but of Grace*; That is, that it might be certain, being unchangable; So as the souls wickedness and wretchedness, rising to what height soever, yet it might not be able to make an alteration in that perfect love. So *Rom. 9. 16.*

Secondly, That there might be a fulness of love, and to make a constant immutable ground for his peoples faith to rest upon him for the perfection of his love towards them. This the spirit may reveal to the soul from that in *Hebr. 6. 17, 18.* The Lord is said to add the confirmation of his Oath, that there might be two immutable grounds, in which it was *impossible for God to Lie.*

Thirdly, That his people might have a sufficient satisfactory consolation, from that fulness of his love, in all necessities, upon all occasions, and

and at all times: That by two immutable things they might have strong consolation.

4. The spirit reveals the Lords undertaking, to effect in, and for the soul, the whole transaction of himself over unto the soul, through his union with Christ by the Almighty Power of his own love alone. *Eph. 2. 5.* The whole work of Salvation is attributed to nothing but love. The Spirit reveals this two ways.

First, The spirit reveals that the Lord hath engaged himself by promise, to effect the transaction of himself over unto the soul, by the Almighty Power of his love. *Isaiah 41. 10, 11.*

Secondly, The spirit remembers the soul, of the necessity that the Lord hath imposed upon Jesus Christ to effect it. *John 10. 16.*

5. The spirit reveals, that the Lord hath undertaken the sutable tempering and disposing of the soul, for all sutable walking in union with the Lord Jesus that is tendered. This the spirit may and doth evidence from that in *Jer. 31. 33.* Where the Lord reveals it to be the very Covenant: *This shall be my Covenant,* or this shall be the love that I will promise; This is part of Gods love to souls united to him, to Write his Law in their Hearts, that is, to conform their spirits to all his Blessed Will, to make their Hearts answerable and sutable to the union with Christ, and all the ways of God that they ought to walk in by vertue of that union.

6. The

6. The Spirit manifests the Lords undertaking the preservation of the Soul by his own power, to the full everlasting injoyment of all the fruits of union. This the Spirit may and doth reveal, it may be from that in *Ezek. 36. 26, 27.* where the Lord declares it to be his own resolution, concerning those he accepts to be partakers of those promises of Love through union with Christ, that his own Spirit shall dwell within them, *and he will cause them to walk in his Statutes and do them, and keep them that they shall not depart from him:* That it shall not be in the power of the Soul to bereave it self of all those pretious fruits of that blessed union with the Lord Jesus, but the Soul must of necessity (unless the Almighty power of God should fail) injoy the fulness of all love and communion, as the consequence of the union with Christ. And for the further evidence of this, the Spirit may and doth reveal it by two things.

First, The Spirit remembers the Soul, that the Lord hath made it his own chosen delight, to be carrying on the Soul towards the injoyment of that fulness and perfection of love, and through his union even the perfection of communion.

Secondly, The Spirit reveals the Lord to hang the highest manifestation of his glory, upon the filling those with all fulness of love and mercy; that are received into that union with the Lord Jesus. And hereby the Spirit satisfies the Soul and convinceth it, that the Lord himself is so interested in perfecting the fruits and consequences of the Souls union with Christ; that unless the Lord should deny himself, there is an impossibility of the Lords failing to preserve the Soul by

his own power, unto the perfect and full injoyment of the perfection of communion, as the consequence of the union with Christ.

The Sixth beam of Light the Spirit manifests from the Gospel is *Sixth beam of Divine Light.* this, *The Spirit manifests the compleat sufficiency, yea the abundancy and superabundancy of security that is given, to secure Souls of their injoyment of all the Gospel thus discovers to them.* Now for the making this beam of light shine forth in its Beauty and Glory, the Spirit may and doth evidence many things.

I. First, The Spirit evidenceth the Lords entering into Covenant with Jesus Christ the Mediator, and engaging himself in that Covenant, to effect the mercy and love that the Gospel discovers, for every Soul that shall embrace him. Two things are to be opened here.

First, That the Lord did thus enter into Covenant with Christ.

Secondly, What security the believing Soul hath from thence, of the Lords effecting of what is so discovered in the Gospel.

First, That the Lord did thus Covenant with Christ himself is apparent.

1. In regard all the whole bundle of the promises, that make up the whole Covenant of the Gospel, they run primarily to Christ, and in his name. To shew that God and Christ were the Covenanters together, that the Covenant was struck up between the Father and the Son, from before the foundations of the World were laid. If you observe the first promise that ever God the Father gave, or the first discovery of Gospel that ever

was unto Souls, in *Gen. 3. 15. The seed of the Woman shall break the Serpents head*: There is the whole Gospel, the whole Covenant; but observe in whose name it runs, in the name of Christ, *The seed of the Woman*, that is Christ; that is, Christ mystically, including his Members too, but it is Christ primarily; *He shall break the Serpents head*, that is, shall triumph over Satan, shall get the victory over Hell, and spoil him that hath formerly taken Souls captive.

2. It appears in regard Christ himself takes God the Father as his God, *John 20. 17. I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God*. So that hence it appears, that God the Father hath engaged himself in a solemn Covenant, unto Jesus Christ as Mediator, *from before the foundations of the World were laid*, to effect what ever the Gospel discovers, for every Soul that should embrace him. And it is from thence that Christ prays, in *John 17. 24. Father I will that those that thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory*.

Secondly, We may see what assurance this affords unto Souls of their unquestionable infallible enjoyment of all that the Gospel thus discovers. There is a two fold security from hence.

1. In regard God the Father stands engaged in a solemn Covenant, to effect all that the Gospel thus discovers unto those Souls that have, in believing, received Christ to be their Husband and Head.

2. The believing Soul is to know and understand, the Lord Christ to have represented every Soul that shall embrace him, in entering into Cove-

nant with the Father. Though the Covenant runs to Christ, it was but as Christ was the first Elect of God, representing all the other Elect; it was but as Christ was a common person, a second *Adam*, that had all that should believe in him, in his person; as the first *Adam* had all that were to come out of his loins included in him, and bound up in him in the first Covenant.

II. Secondly, The Spirit reveals the Father to have paid the highest and dearest price, for the effecting it, and for every Soul embracing Christ, what the Gospel discovers in the surest way unto Souls apprehensions. This the Spirit reveals in discovering God the Father, to have given the dearly beloved of his Soul for that end, to bring about Gospel mercies to be conveyed to Souls, in the surest way to Souls own conceptions and apprehensions. According to that, in *John 3. 16. God so loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son, &c.* For the clearing of this, there must be two things opened.

First, That the Father was at the highest cost and charge, and did pay the greatest price, to effect those mercies for Souls.

Secondly, That one intent of the Father in paying so high a price for Souls, was to satisfy Souls of the enjoyment of them in their own apprehensions.

First, That the Father paid so high a price, for the effecting that mercy and love, that the Gospel discovers for Souls that will embrace him; will appear in three things.

I. In that it cost the Father the abasement for a season, of his own essential glory. I do not mean,

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as if there could have been an extenuation of the essential glory of God ; but I mean there was a vailing of that essential glory, so as those resplendent beams of his glory shined not forth. This the Father did in that his dearly beloved, his only begotten Son, (that had but one and the same essence, and so the same essential glory with himself) should take upon him that frail, vile, despicable nature of Man.

2. In regard the Father deprived himself for a season of his highest delight, his most infinite contentment, for the effecting those Gospel mercies. The Fathers delight is in Communion, and the higher degree of Communion, the higher is the delight of God. Therefore it is said, *Prov. 8.31. That he delights in the habitable parts of the Earth, and with the Sons of Men* ; that is, because there are Creatures capable of Communion with God, there are empty Vessels that he may be pouring out of his transcendent fulness into. Now God deprived himself of his own highest delight, in withdrawing the communications of himself from that his dearly beloved Son, that he was forced to complain, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?*

3. It cost the Father the very death, yea the accursed death, of the most dearly beloved of his Soul, the Lord Jesus. *He delivered him up to death, for us*, saith the Apostle. Yea it cost the Father the suffering the execution of his full wrath and indignation, upon the dearly beloved of his Soul.

Secondly, It must be opened, that the Father was at the highest cost and charge, in effecting that

mercy for Souls, that shall embrace the Lord Christ tendered, on purpose to make it the surer to Souls apprehensions, to give them the fuller security of all that the Gospel discovers. This will appear in three things.

I. In regard there was no absolute necessity in respect of God himself, to effect that which the Gospel discovers, for Souls embracing Christ in that way, at such high cost and charge to himself. That will appear in two things.

1. In regard there was a fulness of power in the Lords mercy, to give absolute pardon unto sinners, irrespectively to satisfaction. The Lord being the high Sovereign of Heaven and Earth, whose sole incommunicable property is, that his will is the original of all Law, the original of the being of all goodness, he hath an absolute power in his own mercy, to have given an absolute pardon to every transgression, committed against his own Law: The Lords Will being the only rule that he walks by; and that Will of his being altogether independent, hath a power within it self, to have given an absolute pardon to every transgression against his Will.

2. In regard the Lord in the effecting of the love and mercy, that the Gospel discovers to Souls, did not proceed according to the exactest rule of Justice. Do not mistake me, I mean not according to the height and rigor of Justice as Justice, which of necessity must have been, had the Lord been bound to his Justice to proceed that way. That appears in two things.

First, The highest exact rule of Justice, admits of no surety in capital Crimes. It requires the individual

dividual person to be the sufferer of the evil threatned for the breach of the Law that was the transgressor of the Law. The voice of exact Justice was only in this wise, *The Soul that sinneth shall die*, without any admission of any Surety. Now it is apparent that the Lord himself in the bringing about, or effecting the Love and Mercy that the Gospel discovers unto Souls, he propounds this way to admit of a Surety. Those that were the offenders of Justice were not sufferers under Justice; but another steps in, and bears the stroke of Justice, that in regard of his own personal transgression, was not guilty of the breach of the Law, or of the Offence against Justice.

Secondly, Were it possible for exact Justice to admit a Surety, yet not possible for exact Justice to find out a Surety, working still as Justice: Justice never looks further than the Transgressor himself to exact Justice upon, unless it be to lay the merit and desert of the transgressor, in some degree, upon all that have dependance upon him. Never came a thought into Justice, as Justice, of remitting the least degree of punishment of the Transgressor; yet you see in the way that he proceeds, he casts about in his own thoughts, to find out one sufficient to bear all the burden of wrath and indignation that is due to Transgressors themselves. The Lord in his design of glorifying his Justice, in effecting Love and Mercy for Souls discovered in the Gospel, he proceeds only according to Love it self; yea, according to nothing else but Love in respect of Souls; it being an act of simple, absolute, pure Love, to impute the transgression of the poor guilty Spirit to the spotless

Lamb, the Lord Jesus; as if he had been to have pardoned those Transgressors, and to have delivered them clearly from Sin, without the imputation of those Transgressions to another: Therefore observe the whole Work of Salvation, though contrived by the infinite Wisdom of God, that Mercy and Justice might meet together, and kiss each other, it is attributed to Love alone, *Eph. 2. 5.* *By Grace (or Love) ye are saved.* So, *Tit. 3. 4. 5.* *Not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us.* Still the whole Work is attributed to the Fathers Love.

2. There was no absolute necessity of Gods being at that cost and charge, to procure Love and Mercy for Souls that would embrace him, in respect of the Souls themselves that were to be partakers of it. That will appear in two things.

1. In regard Souls partaking of that Love and Mercy that the Gospel discovers, were not the Objects of that Love and Mercy primarily, by that cost and charge that the Lord was at in the Death of Christ, to effect that Love and Mercy. If you observe the whole Current of the Scripture, it runs thus; *God so loved the World, that he gave Christ: To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given:* So that Christ being a Gift of Love unto the Soul, it could not be, that they should be made objects of Love primarily by that Gift, that is, originally in the first place: Christ was therefore given, because they were first beloved, & not they beloved because Christ given; seeing the Love of God was fixed upon all its peculiar objects that ever it should be fixed upon in that Gift, and then Christ himself came forth as a Gift of that fixed Love, it could not

not be that they should be primarily made objects of Love, by the Lords effecting that Love and Mercy for them, through his great Cost, of giving the dearly beloved of his Soul for them.

2. Those Souls that shall embrace Christ tendered in the Gospel, were the Objects of that Gospel-Love and Mercy discovered in order of nature before the Lords intention to effect that Gospel-Love and Mercy for them, by that his own cost in giving his own Son. The Lord Christ is discovered as the Means by which God brings about the conveyance of his Love unto his beloved ones: and the End is discovered in the Gospel, to be the *Glory of his own Love*, to make his Love glorious in those objects: Therefore the End must in order of Nature, according to our conception, be before the Means (though all things are at once, and by one Act done by God) so that according to our conceptions, the Love must be first fixed and settled upon Souls in order of nature; I mean, the intention of Love must be first unto Souls, before the conveyance of that Gift of Love through Christ. Thence 'tis that the Scripture speaks of Christ, not only as given, but also called out to the work of Mediatorship, *Heb. 5. 1.* He was ordained to be *the High Priest* by God the Father, *to offer Sacrifice for Souls.*

3. There can be no End of the Lords being at that high charge for the effecting of the Love and Mercy that the Gospel discovers to Souls that will embrace him, but his own praise, and his peoples comfort. Seeing there was no necessity (I speak of absolute and indispensable necessity all this while; I would not be mistaken in a thing of so high a nature) I say, seeing there was no absolute
simple

simple necessity for the Lord to be at such high cost, in respect of himself, and in respect of Souls, to partake of this Mercy ; but it is done freely of God according to his own wisdom. Thence it appears, there can be no higher End than the Lords own praise, the manifesting the Beams of the Lords transcendent Glory more abundantly in the Eyes of Saints and Angels: And this you shall find to be the very End of it, *Eph. 1. 4. 6.* Saith the Apostle, *He hath chosen us in Christ*: That is, He hath chosen us as the Members of Christ, the first Elect of God, and that Head of the Mystical Body, that God hath glorified himself in: This he hath done, saith he, *before the foundation of the world*; and therefore he destinated us *to the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ*. Here is the Fathers Love in the Means; and in the End. *v. 6. To the praise of the Glory of his Grace*, that is of his own Love; wherein, that is, in which Love, *he hath made us accepted in the Beloved*, that is in Christ. Now this may be taken two wayes: Either for his praise actively to be given to him, by the Soul that partakes of that Love and Mercy that the Gospel discovers: Or else passively, to be manifested through this way, unto those that partake of that Love and Mercy that the Gospel discovers: In both ways the Lord intended to have his glorious Love admired and adored, and himself sanctified in the beholding of it; through the effecting and conveying of that his Love and Mercy unto Souls, through such cost and charge, in giving his dearly beloved Son. Now observe it; There are especially two wayes, how the partaker of that Love and Mercy the Gospel discovers, doth actively give

give the Lord the praise of the glory of his Love.

1. In admiring the unmeasurable dimensions of his Love, in gazing upon the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of his Love, so as to see it unmeasurable and bottomless, and to adore God in beholding it. 2. In their Souls relying with a fulness of confidence upon God, for that his Love in Christ. It is alwayes in the same degree, wherein a Soul takes up its rest in God for any thing, that a Soul sanctifies God in his heart; therefore *If. 8. 13.* when the Prophet exhorts them to sanctifie God, he saith, *Fear not their fear, but make him your fear and your dread*; as if he should say, therein you shall sanctifie him, when your spirits take up their rest in him alone. Now as God is thus sanctified in the heart in general, so he is sanctified in the heart in respect of every particular Attribute of his, in this way only, when a Souls confidence is in him alone: And thus in particular in respect of his Love: God hath the praise of the glory of his Love from the Soul, when the Heart takes up its full rest in God, with a fulness of confidence for all Love through Christ. Now observe, these being the two special wayes how the Lord hath the praise of his glorious Love from Souls that partake of the Love that the Gospel discovers, and then both these proceeding from a Souls apprehension of the certainty and infallibility of the Lords Love in Christ; thence it must needs appear, that the Lords being at the high cost to effect all that Love and Mercy discovered in the Gospel for Souls, through the death of that dearly beloved of his Soul, that this must be on purpose done
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by God, for the making that his Love and Mercy that the Gospel discovers, more sure and certain unto Souls embracing it in their own apprehensions.

Thirdly, The Spirit discovers the Lords own Bond, given out to the persons themselves that shall embrace the Gospel, for their assurance of all that the Gospel discovers. All the Promises written in the Lords Blessed Book are but as so many Bonds of Gods own writing, by the hand of the great Secretary of Heaven, the blessed Spirit of God, on purpose to confirm and assure Souls of all that the Gospel discovers. The Spirit reveals Promise upon Promise, to seal to and confirm the same thing; as you may see, *Heb. 6. 12, 13, 14, 15*. The Promise is said to be given there as a Discovery of the Immutability of the Lords Counsel, that is, of the infallible and unchangeable certainty of all that the Gospel discovers.

Fourthly, The Spirit riseth higher; he adds the confirmation of his own Oath, the highest Oath that was possible for God to swear; which was by himself, that the Soul might have security upon security to his weak apprehension.

Fifthly, The Spirit reveals the adding of the Blood of Christ as the Seal to the Bond. The Spirit manifests the Lord to have employed Jesus Christ to be the Testator to Souls, that by the Death of the Testator, the Testament, or the Will of God revealed in the Gospel, might be made unquestionably certain, that the Soul might have fulness of security to his poor scrupulous Spirit; now security comes in upon security, to a superabundance of it.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, The Spirit reveals the Lord to have engaged the Honour and Credit of his ever-blessed Name, for the better securing Souls, and fuller assuring them of all that the Gospel discovers to them. This you shall see in *Exod. 33. 19. I will proclaim the Name of the Lord before thee* (saith God to Moses) *and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy to whom I will shew mercy*; which doth both include a disposition to be gracious, and a free disposition to be gracious; and it includeth that Grace of his to be ordered only according to his own will. Now did not the Lord freely love loveless sinners upon no other ground but his own will (which is the very Sum of all that the Gospel saith) then this Title of Gods Honour should be defaced and blemished. But God saith, *Exod. 3. 15. This is my Name for ever, and this is my Memorial to all generations*: That is to say, this is the distinction whereby I will be known to all generations, that I am the God that send out a Redeemer to lost sinners; which implicitly and virtually includeth thus much, as if God should say, Mine own honour, the highest Title of my glory should fail, if I fail of embracing every loveless sinner through the Lord Jesus, that will accept me. And thence you shall observe, when the Lord made the clearest Revelation of himself to *Moses, Exod. 34. 6, 7.* The very Name whereby he calls himself, is that which includeth all that the Gospel of Christ reveals to sinners: *The Lord passed by him, and proclaimed, The Lord merciful, and gracious, long-suffering, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity,*
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transgression and sin. Here is the whole Mystery of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and nothing else but the Mystery of the Gospel, that the Lord owns to be the Name of his Honour, that the Lord would have to be his Title, whereby he would be distinguished from others, and whereby he would be known unto Souls.

Two things must be opened for the clearing of it sufficiently to the satisfaction of Souls.

First, It must be opened that the whole mystery of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is virtually contained in the name of God.

Secondly, That particular Souls may have security unto themselves from that name of God, and may safely through believing look upon the honour of his name, as engaged to them, to fulfil what the Gospel reveals.

First, It must be opened that the whole mystery of the Gospel, or whatever the Gospel reveals, is included in the name of God: We shall open it from that of *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. which God owns as his name. There are eight titles, that the Lord assumes to himself, that make up in the Lords account his name, wherein he will be known unto Souls.

I. The first Title of his honour, that concurs to the making up of his name, is *Merciful*, the Lord [*Merciful*] which includes two things.

1. That there are bowels of pitty and compassion in the bosom of God, that there are precious dispositions unto infinite compassions, naturally dwelling in God. The word is the same with that in *Jer.* 31. 21. which may be rendred [*Bowels.*]

2. It includes that the Lord is ready to act those bowels of compassion, towards Souls drowned in the depths of the most extream misery. Misery and Mercy are Relatives, and according to the depths of Misery, so is the height of the working of Mercy. Now under that very one title, is comprehended the sum and substance of all that the Gospel discovers. There is but one voice that the Gospel of Jesus Christ speaks in, and that is this, that the Lord is full of bowels of pitty and compassion, towards every loveless sinner that will accept his compassions tendered.

II. The second Title of God is *Gracious*. This implies two things.

1. The Lords acceptance of loveless sinners into favour.

2. The acceptance of miserable ones into favour meerly out of the freedom of the workings of his own favour, from motives out of his own bosom, without respect to any desert. Therefore the whole voice of the Gospel is, *by Grace ye are saved*.

III. The third Title that concurs to make up the honourable name of God, is, *The Lord long Suffering*; or as it may be rendred [he is Slow to anger.] Here are two things included.

1. It implies a long time of forbearance in God to execute Judgment upon sinners, according to their own demerit, *2 Pet. 3. 9.*

2. It implies that that forbearance to execute Judgment upon sinners, according to their sins, is on purpose that sinners might be accepted into love and favour, and prevent the execution of Judgment, *Isa. 30. 18.*

IV. The

IV. The fourth Title of the Lords honour is, *The Lord abundant in Goodness*, or extolling in Kindness. That implies three things.

1. The compleat fulness of all Goodness that can be necessary for a Soul, to be treasured up by God, in the bosom of Christ for Souls.

2. It implies a transcendency of all supply for empty Souls, to be in himself through Christ. It implies a Superlative Fulness, a Fulness that is more then sufficient, a Fulness that infinitely exceeds what ever a Soul can want.

3. It implies the readiness and facility of God, to be dispensing that goodness unto Souls.

V. The fifth Title of the Lords name is, *That he is abundant in Truth*. Truth doth not here imply Justice and Righteousness, but it implies Faithfulness in God, to be true according to the Revelation of himself. So that Truth implies the certainty, the infallibility of the Lords fulfilling unto Souls whatever he promised to be treasured up in himself for them.

VI. There is a sixth Title that concurs to make up the Lords Honour, that is, his reserving or his *Keeping Mercy for thousands*. This implies two things.

(1.) A large comprehensiveness of love and mercy, to be comprehending multitudes of miserable undone sinners; *Keeping Mercy for Thousands*: It is a Synecdochical Speech, a finite Number is put for an infinite: (2) *It employ & inexhaustiveness* ‡

VII. There is a seventh Title that concurs to make up the Lords Honour, and that is, *Forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin*. Here are three several Expressions, that in a large sense point at the

‡ of any one soul from y Grace & mercy. That's but the gospel voice making the general tender of the love & mercy of God to every sinner without exception, that will embrace him.

the same thing; every iniquity being a transgression, and every transgression being a sin: yet certainly something is intended by the Blessed God in proclaiming his Name thus. Some have conceived by Iniquity to be meant Sins against God himself; by Transgression, to be meant Sins against our Neighbour; and by Sin, to be meant Sins against our own Souls. Others have made them to be sins of Malice, and sins of Infirmary, and sins of Ignorance. Others conceive by Iniquity (because the word comes from a Root in the Original that signifies *Crookedness*) to be meant the Corruption of Nature; and by Transgression to be meant the Breach of the Law through infirmity; and by Sin, to be meant Stubbornness against God. However, thus much we may affirm to be the meaning of the Holy Ghost, that under these three are comprehended all Sins whatever, of what nature and degree soever. Then this Title of the Lords Honour implies thus much, an impossibility for any degree of Sin whatever to hinder the Lord from shewing mercy, and being gracious in that way of fulness of Love, that he reveals himself to be inclined to, and to be his own Nature.

VIII. The eighth Title of the Lords Honour includes a Gospel-Discovery too; and that is in those words, *That will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, and upon the Childrens Children, unto the third and to the fourth Generation.* This seems indeed at first view, to have little of Gospel in it. But I dare not consent here to the Paraphrase the Translators have given upon the words: But the words are to be rendred thus, *forgiving Iniquity, Transgression*

gression and Sin, and in purifying he will not purifie, or in absolving will not absolve; not mentioning either wicked ones, or guilty ones, or any person whatever. For indeed it seems to be a kind of contradiction, should the words run thus, *The Lord forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin, and will by no means clear the guilty*; therefore I shall hold to the words as they may be most nearly rendred; that is, *forgiving sin*, and cleansing from sin he will not cleanse, *visiting the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children*. And then if you observe, this title of the Lords Honour is only thus much; That he is the *Lord forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin*, ^{that only to} ~~and upon~~ whom he will, *visiting the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children*; including thus much, that the Lord doth and will exercise his Mercy, his Grace, his long-suffering, and his abundant goodness unto Souls, only upon the motions of his own will; upon no other ground but because he will, and to no other persons upon no other respect, but only to those whom himself freely will: And then that includes the last Beam of the Gospel-light, after all the other formerly discovered (which indeed is the very Mystery of the Gospel it self) and that is, that all those Gospel-dispensations are only to those persons whom the Lord will, and upon no other ground but the Lords Will, though they be so tendered to every loveless Soul in general that will embrace him. So that thus now you see the first thing cleared; That all Gospel-discoveries are at least virtually included in the Lords own Name.

Secondly, It must be cleared, That the Soul may behold by believing, the Credit and Honour of

of this blessed Name of God engaged for his security, and for the fuller assurance of the Soul of all that the Gospel discovers to it. This may be opened two ways.

1. In general. 2. More particularly, discovering the particular security the Soul may have against all fears and scruples, that is possible for the Soul to apprehend in its security.

First, In general it appears, That the Soul may behold the Credit of the Lords Name engaged for his security and assurance, in regard there is nothing that the Gospel discovers unto Souls, but the same is included in the blessed Name of God. Two things follow from hence.

1. The Soul may be assured that there is an impossibility of the Lords changing that his ever blessed Name. The Word is gone out of the mouth of God, that that's *his Name for ever, and that is his Memorial to all Generations*. Thence the Soul may assure it self, that though *Heaven and Earth pass away*, and melt like wax, yet not one Title of what the Gospel discovers can possibly fall to the ground, seeing it is impossible that the highest Majesty of Heaven and Earth can change.

2. From thence the Soul may conclude, That there is a Necessity for the blessed God to deny himself, and to trample under his feet his dearest Glory, if the least Title of whatever the Gospel reveals, should fail, seeing all is included in his Name for ever.

Secondly, The Soul may behold through believing, the Credit of the Lords Name to be engaged for his security of what the Gospel disco-

vers in particular, against all fears and scruples.

1. The Credit and Honour of the Lords Name is engaged, That there can be no depth of misery so deep, as relief and succour should not be in Christ for the poor, perishing, sinking Soul. That's the very first Title of the Lords Honour, that concurs to make up his Name : *He is merciful*; that is, he hath bowels of mercy for Souls in the depth of the greatest misery. Thence the Soul may conclude, that the honour of that blessed Title of the Lords Name must fail, that Link in the Golden Chain must be cut asunder, should the most unspeakable depth of misery that ever Soul was plunged in, be a case hopeless or helpless.

2. The Credit and Honour of the Lords ever blessed Name is engaged, that there may be a free receiving of the most loveless Soul into love and favour, that hath nothing but what is abominable to the blessed pure eyes of God within him. You see the second Title of his Honour is *The Lord Gracious*; that is, receiving into favour freely undeserving wretches, undesired wretches, without respect to any thing in them : So that when the poor scrupulous Soul shall begin to fear that there is not ground enough in the Gospel of Jesus Christ for him to roll himself into that blessed open bosom of the Lords love in Christ, with a confidence of the willingness of the Lord to accept his loveless Soul into favour, then he may behold the Credit and Honour of his Name to be engaged for the Souls security, to assure it that the most forlorn Soul, that is nothing else but Sin, that can do nothing else but sin, may be freely admitted into that
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bosom of his love, to be an object of all favour, and all kindness whatsoever.

3. The Credit and Honour of the Lords blessed Name is engaged for the bearing with the most crooked Soul in his crookedness for a season, and his waiting to receive the most crooked Soul into favour and love. The Name of the Lord you see is *Long-suffering*; that is, he that bears long before he executes any wrath. Hence the Credit of the Lords Name is engaged to secure Souls of what the Gospel reveals in ~~three~~^{two} particulars.

(1.) To secure the Sinner of acceptance into favour, that hath most desperately and rebelliously for a long time neglected Grace and Mercy.

(2.) Hence the Credit of the Lords Name is engaged for the continuance of his Favour towards the most crooked perverse heart, notwithstanding his crookedness. So that the Gospel reveals an impossibility for Sin or all the Powers of Hell to force the Soul from the blessed bosom of the Lords love in Christ, where it hath once taken up its rest.

4. The Credit of the Lords Name is engaged to secure the empty Soul of all fulness of Grace and Mercy that is suitable to his necessity; to be contained in the bosom of God in Christ for the Soul embracing him. The Gospel saith, *Eph. 3. 8.* there is *unsearchable riches in Christ*; and the Lord calls his Name *Abundant in goodness*: what is the difference between these two? Riches is nothing but goodness, or good things considered as they are in abundance; and you see the Lords Name is called *Abundant in goodness*. So that here the Credit of the Lords Name is engaged to secure the Soul against all that can possibly be objected, in regard

Of his own emptiness, poverty, and nothingness. So that,

1. In case the Soul fears it hath no strength to yield obedience to what the Lord commands, and thereupon begins to fear that all the Gospel discovers to him shall be made of no effect; presently through believing the Soul may behold, not only that the Gospel hath reveal'd a fulness of all goodness (and so strength it self to the Soul) but he may behold the Lord to have called himself by that Name of *Abundant in Goodness*.

2. The Soul is secured by the Credit of the Lords Name, against all fears of his not prevailing with God in Christ to be partaker of that Mercy, and Love and Goodness that the Gospel discovers. He may behold the Lords Name to be *Abundant in Goodness*; not only goodness, but abounding, having more than a fulness; so that it should run over into empty Souls, like Rivers abounding with water, freely overflowing his Banks.

5. The Credit of the Lords Name is engaged to a compleat, perfect fulfilling of his revealing mercy and goodness towards loveless Sinners. His Name you see is *Abundant in Truth*. So that God must lose that Beam of the glory of his blessed Name, which is *Abundant in Truth*, should the least Tittle, the least *Iota* of any word revealing Mercy and Love to loveless Sinners fall to the ground.

6. The Credit of the Lords Name is engaged for the accepting every Soul into grace and favour discovered in the Gospel, without making any exception against any one Soul whatever. The Lords Name you see is, the *Lord keeping Mercy for thousands*, that is, for infinite numbers. That is to

every word of

to say, his Name is, he that is ready to shew mercy to every Soul without exception.

7. The Credit of the Lords Name is engaged, to secure Souls, that no kind or degree of wickedness can be a prevention of his acceptance of a Soul into his favour and love. His Name you see is the *Lord forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin*, that is, forgiving all kinds and degrees of sin.

8. The Credit and Honour of the Lords Name is engaged, that the ground of his receiving Souls into love and favour shall be only his own precious will. His Name is, *He will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy*, Excd. 33. 9. So that when the Souls confidence begins to waver about the Lords willingness to accept him into love and favour, because he beholds no ground or argument of love, then the Soul may behold the blessed Name of God, that *hath mercy upon whom he will have mercy*, looking for no Arguments of his love and mercy, but his own Will. Thus you see that the Credit of the Lords blessed Name is engaged for assuring Souls of whatever the Gospel discovers. And that's the Sixth Particular.

Seventhly, The Spirit reveals the Lord to have given in his blessed word Presidents, Examples and Patterns, suitable to the Case and State of every Soul, upon whom the Lord hath already effected whatever mercy and love the Gospel discovers to forlorn, despicable, loveless Sinners. The Lord hath so abounded and superabounded in the riches of his own love, that out of the bowels of those his compassions towards loveless Sinners, he hath condescended beneath himself and his own super-excellent Majesty, to give all kind of securities what-

ever are possible to be given to poor doubting Spirits concerning his Gospel-love. There are eight particular Cases wherein the Lord hath given Patterns and Examples unto Souls; which Cases comprehend all kinds of Estates and Tempers, that it is possible for any Soul to be under.

I. In the case of the superlative height of Souls wickedness, the being plunged into a bottomless Ocean of all kind of abominations and pollutions that are imaginable. In this case the Lord hath given eminent patterns.

First, If you look into that place, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. and read over the black bill of almost all kind of abominations that are there reckoned up, *Fornicators, Idolaters, Adulterers, Effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, Theeves, Covetous, Drunkards, Revilers, Extortioners*: And you shall see v. 11. that some that are contained in the black bill of all pollutions, were *Washed, Sanctified, Justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus*, all Gospel mercy and love was discovered unto them; for saith the Text, *Such were some of you*. Another pattern the Lord left, 2 Chron. 33. 11, 12, 13. of *Manasseh* who heaped up wickedness upon wickedness, yet the Lord made him a pattern of Gospel-love and mercy. Another you have in *Paul*, in 1 Tim. 1. 15. *One drinking up the blood of Saints like water*, one blaspheming Jesus Christ, offering all kind of injuries and indignities to the name of Christ, and yet the Lord did shew forth all long-suffering, that is all kind of love, manifested in patience and forbearance, and admitted him into union and communion with himself through Christ; and this he did on purpose that he might leave it as an experiment of his Love and Mercy to them
who

who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. So *Act. 2. 38.* those that had washed their malicious and envious Hands, in the innocent blood of the Lord Jesus, were not excluded from Gospel Mercy and Love. So if you look into the doleful story of our first fall, by *Eve* who did first provoke the anger and indignation of God, yet she was made a pattern of Gospel Mercy and Love, *Gen. 3. 15.*

II. The second case wherein God hath given patterns is in the case of unbelief, the potency and prevalency of unbelieving dispositions. I shall propound but two patterns to you in this case: First of *David*, who under the rage of unbelief, *Psal. 116. 11. said in his heart, all men are liars*; that those Prophets that had revealed to him from the mouth of God that he should inherit the Kingdom were but dissemblers, notwithstanding he had been satisfied of the truth of the message coming from God. The second pattern is in unbelieving *Thomas*, *John 20. 24, 25, 26.* that would not believe the resurrection of Christ, *except he should see in his Hands the print of the nailes, and thrust his Hands into his side*; yet Gospel Love and Mercy was discovered to him, *vers. 27.* under this case come in these two cases of Souls, wherein they are much perplexed.

1. In case of the Souls not feeling the Lord by his Almighty power, drawing their Hearts to believe. Saith the poor perplexed Soul, surely the Lord draws all that he intends should come to Christ through believing; but alas, saith the Soul, I do not see that God hath drawn my Heart, therefore surely God hath not chosen me to be an object of Gospel Grace and Love; now the Spirit may witness

ness from hence, that there hath been a Soul as much under the dominion of unbelieving dispositions as his unbelieving Spirit, yet the bowels of Love and Mercy revealed in the Gospel were not restrained from them.

2. Here comes in that case of the weakness of affections and desires towards believing, and of the strong inclination of the Spirit, to receive security of the Lords willingness to make him the object of Gospel Mercy and Love, from something that should be visible and sensible to the Soul. Thats also a common case of Souls, that they cannot discern any disposition in their Hearts, to believe the Lords willingness to receive them into the bosom of his Mercy and Love, revealed in the Gospel, from the bare word of God alone, but if they could see any fruit of that Love and Mercy in their bosoms, then they think they should believe. You see the Spirit hath here in this case also evidenced the Lord to have afforded a real experiment of his Mercy and Love to a Soul; in the case of unbelieving *Thomas*, who was not only inclined to see ground of believing in a visible way, from the sight of his Eyes, and the feelings of his Hands; but he was resolved to have it that way or no way: unless I see thus and thus, I will not believe.

III. A third case wherein the Lord hath given presidents; is in the case of loathsome, horrible, dreadful and most hateful imaginations working in the Heart against God. In this case the Lord hath not left himself without some experimental witness of the discovery of his Mercy and Love. Now the case being very high, I find an experiment of Gospel

spel Mercy and Love, discovered in a case that is as high. In this case the Lord hath left Jesus Christ himself as a pattern, his Heart and Spirit was perplexed and troubled with as hateful, horrible imaginations propounded to him, as ever were propounded to any Soul; in *Matth. 4. 6, 9.* the Devil propounded to him that he should murder himself, *If thou be the Son of God, cast thy self down.*

Secondly, That he should presume upon his Fathers promise to him, and be careless of walking according to his Fathers will; saith the Devil, *He hath said that his Angels should have charge over him, lest he should dash his foot against a stone.*

There is a third sort of thoughts propounded to his imagination worse then these, and that is that he should worship the Devil: What more hateful and horrible thoughts could be injected into any bosom than this, to worship the Devil himself? Now under this general are comprehended these two particular cases.

1. There is comprehended the cases of all blasphemous thoughts, that are wont to perplex distressed Souls. That if a Soul should say within himself, sure never any object of the Lords Love ever had such hellish thoughts, as are presented to my mind, such thoughts as my Heart trembles to name; the Spirit may then bring to the Souls remembrance this pretious pattern of Christ; the Devil injecting into his pure mind, thoughts that were as dreadfully derogatory to the honour of the Lords highest Majesty, thoughts that had as much of the poison of Hell in them, as ever thought that was injected into thy cursed Heart.

2. Under

2. Under this comes in all kind of Temptations concerning self murder, or self destruction. In this case the Spirit may bring to remembrance the Lord Christ himself, as the Souls president or pattern, the Lords letting him be perplexed with temptations of the same kind.

IV. A fourth case is the want of all sensible manifestations of God to the Soul, either in quickning and reviving, or in comforting. In this case you may take the dearly beloved one of God, *David*, *Psal. 22.* (wherein indeed he speaks typically relating to Christ especially, yet also speaks but the thoughts of his own Spirit at that time too) saith he, *v. 1. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring ?* And *v. 14. So Psal. 77. 3, 4. I remembered God, and was troubled, I complained and my Spirit was overwhelmed, &c.* Another pattern the Lord gives us of the Holy man *Job*, he cries out, *Chap. 6. 4. The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my Spirit, &c.* So *Chap. 13. 24, 25, 26. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy ? &c.* Now under this come in two particular cases of the Soul.

1. The case of the defect of all the workings of the quickning Spirit into the Soul.

2. Under this comes in the case of the Souls wanting the manifesting light of the Spirit, to reveal the Gospel in its beauty and glory to its Soul. So that if any Soul wanting this manifesting light of the Spirit, should begin to cast off all confidence, and to waver, and stagger, and doubt, least the Lord should not be willing to accept it

to be an object of Gospel love; then the Spirit may, and doth sometimes bring to remembrance these eminent patterns, of those who were in the very same temper, under the same wants, and yet they were really the objects of that love and mercy that the Gospel in Christ reveals.

V. A fifth case is the case of fruitlesness, inefficacy of the breathings of the Soul after God in prayer. In this case also the Lord hath given eminent patterns: Those two forenamed ones, both *Job* and *David*, you shall find to have been in the same case, *Job* 23. 8, 9. *Behold I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him, on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him, &c.* His meaning is, he used all kind of means, the utmost diligence in seeking after God, but he would not be found. So if you look upon *David*, *Psal.* 22. 2. *O my God I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not, and in the night season I am not silent.* So that here God shews Souls an experiment of some who were in the same case, and yet objects of his love and mercy.

VI. A sixth case is the inability of the Soul to pour out requests. That in *Isa.* 63. 17. will shew the Lord to have left his whole Church as a pattern in that case; *Why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?* These Souls complain of the Lords suffering such senselesness, and blockishness of Spirit to be upon them, as made them unsutable for every duty of the Lords worship, and yet notwithstanding these were objects of mercy and love.

VII. A seventh case is the beholding all arguments that are possible to be imagined in a Soul, against

against those promises of love and mercy that the Gospel tenders. In this case the Lord hath given that pretious pattern of *Abraham*, whom he chose to be the pattern of all believers, *Rom. 4. 18, 19.* *He against hope believed in hope*; that is, against all ground and reason, and arguments of hope that could be imagined. Though he saw all possibility against that promise of love and mercy, that the Lord had given him concerning the Messiah to come through his loins, to be his lawful seed by *Sarah*, yet notwithstanding he believed, though he saw his own body dead, and the deadness of *Sarah's* womb, yet it is said, *v. 20.* he staggered not at the promise through unbelief, his Spirit did not so much as waver. Under this general may be comprehended these three particular cases of the Soul.

1. The case of the Souls thinking himself to be the most unlikely under Heaven, to be an object of Gospel mercy and love. The Soul considering himself to be a poor despicable useless wretch, a low contemptible worm, not having any thing wherein to be serviceable for the Lords honour as others have; yea, being far deeper drenched into sin than other Souls are: Here is a pattern the Lord hath made to stand upon sacred Record, of his fulfilling a promise of mercy and love, notwithstanding all unlikelihood that can be imagined.

2. Under this comes in that particular case of the Souls inability, and insufficiency to receive and embrace that mercy and love the Gospel reveals, according as the Lord requires. That is, when the Soul in gazing upon those blessed tenders of love and mercy, begins to say within it self, I am so dead
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in sin, that I have not the least ability to receive that mercy and love tendered, according as God requires; and therefore I shall never be the object of Gospel mercy and love, seeing I cannot receive it. Now in this case also, this pretious pattern that the Lord hath given of *Abraham*, may be brought to the Souls remembrance by the Spirit, to testify that the Lords promise of mercy and love to *Abraham*, was fulfilled when he was in the same case, when he could do nothing, had not the least ability and power to effect what was necessary to be effected by him, for the fulfilling of the promise.

3. Under this comes in that particular case, of the Souls beholding nothing but opposition in his Heart, against that mercy and love that the Gospel reveals. So that if the Soul should begin to say within it self, it cannot be that he should be admitted by God to be an object of that Gospel mercy and love, seeing his Heart nothing else but speaks against it: Then the Spirit may bring to the Souls remembrance, that which the Lord gave as a promise of mercy and love unto *Abraham*, *He against hope believed in hope*: There was not only no hope, but all things against hope of that promise being fulfilled to him, that he might be a pattern of believing.

& that is the case

VIII. There is an eighth case of wretched, treacherous backsliding from God, after mutual closures and embraces between God and the Soul. In this case the Lord hath given pretious presidents of his Gospel love and mercy, that have been communicated unto Souls so backsliding. You may first look upon *Aaron's* case, who was none of the

the least backsliders; *Exod.* 32. 2, 3, 4, 5. *Aaron* that had made choise of God alone to be his God, here became a wretched backslider from the pure worship of God according to his own will, to an Idolatrous worship, to make a graven Image, (an Idol after the manner of *Egypt*) and to make an Altar too, still all contrary to the way of the Lords worship: And yet if you look into *Exod.* 40. 12, 13. you shall find this very *Aaron*, notwithstanding this backsliding, taken to be an object of that love and mercy, so as to be chosen Minister of the Lords Sanctuary, to be of the very highest office of the Lords worship here below, to be made the most immediate type of representing Jesus Christ, that blessed true High Priest. Another pattern of backsliding you may behold in *Solomon*, in *1 King.* 7. 11. *He built an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab:* yet this backslider notwithstanding was an object of his special Gospel love and mercy, as appears *Psal.* 89. 32, 33. *My love will I never take from him.* I need not name *Peters* case, and *Dauids* case, it is known to you all. You see it is apparent, the Lord hath given eminent patterns in this case of the Souls backsliding. So that herein many particular cases of Souls come in, as the case of negligence and slightrness of Heart towards God; the case of estrangeness from God, after it once tasted of communion with him: The case of all kind of wretchedness that the Soul can call to remembrance against it self, or that possibly the Soul can be guilty of, after the injoyment of the discovery of the Lords love and mercy in the Lord Jesus to him. So that in case upon any such ground as the Souls wretched, wicked dealing
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with God, after union and communion with him, and its turning aside from God, the Soul should suffer its Confidence to waver concerning the will of God to accept his loveless backsliding Soul into the bosom of his love and mercy, then the Spirit may bring to its remembrance those precious patterns that the Lord hath given concerning his acceptance of such backsliding wretches, after such discoveries of himself. That's the seventh Particular that the Spirit may reveal, and bring to Souls remembrance, to shew that the Lord hath given Security upon Security, abundance and superabundance of Security, to assure Souls of what the Gospel reveals,

Eighthly, The last particular that the Spirit brings to the Souls remembrance, or doth or may reveal to it is this; That there are peculiar, near invaluable Engagements upon God himself, in respect of himself, to fulfil those precious Gospel-Discoveries to every Soul that shall embrace or accept them. The Lord out of his incomprehensible wisdom, hath so curiously contrived that Gospel-love to loveless Sinners, that he hath sweetly interwoven his own interest with their interest: And certainly the Lord hath revealed his own interest thus to be in the compleating of his Gospel-love and mercy to loveless Sinners, that shall embrace him, on purpose to secure their wavering, unstable Spirits, and to settle them in a more fullness of confidence in Christ, that their Spirits might be filled with *joy and peace through believing*. The engagements that are upon God himself, in respect of himself, to fulfil Gospel-love and mer-

cy to Sinners that shall embrace him ; are divers.

1. The first Engagement upon God himself, in regard of himself, from whence Souls may have security, is this ; That the Lord hath chosen every such particular loveless Sinner as shall accept of his Gospel-discovery, to be one of his own Family, and his own Household. Hence you shall find in *Eph. 3. 15.* That all Believers are called but *one Family.* And they are called the *Household of God,* *Eph. 2. 19.* And in *Heb. 3. 6.* The whole Church is called *The House of Christ.* Now what abundant security may the believing Soul receive concerning fulfilling Gospel-discoveries, from the Spirits bringing to remembrance this Engagement of God in respect of himself, to fulfil Gospel-discoveries.

1. From hence the Soul may behold through believing, God himself to be engaged to remove all Jars, Differences, Breaches and Disagreements from himself and every Soul that shall accept those Gospel-discoveries. From thence the Soul may argue sweetly within his own Spirit, against all Objections and Scruples concerning its Rebellion and Disobedience, and say thus, Will not the God of Peace have peace in his own Family, in his own Household ?

2. From thence the believing Soul may behold the Lord engaged to compleat and perfect a work of Sanctification in his own Soul, if he will embrace the Gospel-discovery, though he be altogether unclean, though he be polluted in the most superlative degree. The Soul may argue within
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its own Spirit thus, Seeing every Soul that will embrace Gospel-discoveries, is chosen to be one of the Lords Household, his own Family, surely the Lords Family shall be all suitable to himself.

3. Thence the Soul may discern the Lord to be engaged to communicate all suitable love and mercy to his poor needy Spirit. The Soul may say within it self, Seeing every Soul that shall embrace or accept Gospel-discoveries, is chosen to be one of the Lords Family, surely there can be no provision wanting for the Family of God himself.

4. Hence the Soul may discern through believing, God to be engaged to accomplish, perfect and compleat the whole work of Salvation, against all impediments whatever, if his Soul will embrace those Gospel-discoveries. The Soul may say within it self, Seeing every Soul that will embrace the Gospel-discoveries, is chosen to be of the Family and Household of God, it is beyond the power of Hell and the corrupt heart, to deprive the Lord of any of his own Family.

2. A Second Engagement that is laid upon God in respect of himself, to fulfil Gospel-discoveries unto loveless Sinners embracing him, is, That every particular despicable Sinner accepting Gospel-discoveries is chosen by God himself to be one of his peculiar Children. According to that in *John 1. 12. As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God.* They are called *Christs Brethren*, *John 20. 17.* Now what full compleat Security may every Soul through believing receive from thence!

And here first, I shall open to you what full Security

curity Souls may have for the fulfilling every Gospel-discovery to them.

Secondly, What security they may have of these Gospel-discoveries being fulfilled to them, in every case that it is possible for them to be in, when the Gospel-discovery shall come to them.

First, We shall shew you what security Souls may have for the fulfilling every Gospel-discovery to them, from the Engagement.

1. From hence the Soul through believing, may discern the Lord to be engaged to accept every forlorn Sinner that will accept these Gospel-discoveries, into the nearest union and conjunction of Love that is possible,

2. Hence it may behold the Lord engaged to receive its forlorn Soul into that near union of Love, though there is nothing that is amiable in it.

3. Hence it may behold the Lord engaged to communicate all fulness of love and mercy that the poor empty Soul shall be capable of, if it will accept these Gospel-discoveries, If the Soul be chosen to be one of the Lords Children, it is chosen to be an *Heir*, Rom. 8. 17.

4. The Soul may behold the Lord engaged to an everlasting unchangeable continuance of all love and favour to it in its embracing these Gospel-discoveries.

Secondly, Hence the Soul may have a fulness of Security for the fulfilling those precious Gospel-discoveries to it, in whatever case it is possible for any Soul to be in, to whom these Gospel-discoveries come.

1. In case of desperate wickedness, and great unworthiness. In this case the Soul may have Security,

curity, and behold the Lord engaged in respect of himself, to fulfil those Gospel-discoveries to it, notwithstanding his superlative degree of wickedness, and highest unworthiness. The Soul may argue thus, Will not a tender-hearted Father accept a poor rebellious Child to Amity, Love and Agreement with himself, though he have been rebellious in the highest degree?

2. In the case of the most horrible Temptations. The worst the Soul can imagine of it self in this case, is this; That through some accursed wickedness it should wilfully cast away its own Soul, and join in League and Amity with those infernal powers; and suppose this, yet from hence the Soul may discern the Lord engaged to fulfil all his Gospel-discoveries of love and mercy to his particular Soul in this case, if he will accept those Gospel-discoveries.

3. Hence it may have Security in the saddest damps, straitness, and deadness, and indisposedness that ever possessed any Soul in Prayer. The Soul may say, Suppose a tender-hearted Father should have a beloved Child that is sick and distempered, that he cannot so much as speak to him for succour, but look upon his Fathers face with watery eyes, with sighs and groans, what thinkest thou, O my Soul, would not the dearest pangs of compassion in the Father be working towards the Child?

4. Hence the Soul may have full Security for fulfilling Gospel-discoveries into his bosom, though he be in that doleful state of captivity to an unbelieving heart, void of all sensible visible dispositions in his Spirit. The Soul in this case may, and ought

to argue within it self thus; O my Soul, it is true indeed, thou hast neither power nor disposition in thee, to yield obedience to the precious Command of the ever blessed God, who commands thee to accept of love and mercy tendered to thy loveless Soul in the Lord Jesus, but dost thou think it possible that thy want of power to believe, should prevent the Lords acceptance of thee into the bosom of his fatherly affection? Yea, I may add more in this case, from this engagement of God to fulfil Gospel-discoveries, the Soul may behold him engaged to contribute believing dispositions.

5. The Soul may have full Security concerning the fulfilling the Gospel-discoveries to it self, though it be in the case of slavery and vassallage to the most crooked, untoward, perverse heart that ever dwelt in any Son or Daughter of *Adam*. It may thus say, O my Soul, is it possible for thy crookedness to have an influence upon the heart of the immutable unchangeable God, to blot out the Name that is written there from eternity, if thou wilt accept Gospel-Discoveries?

6. The Soul from hence hath full security of the fulfilling all Gospel-discoveries into his bosom, though it be in the saddest backsliding case from what his Spirit was once allured to, that ever any was guilty of, since the first Apostacy from God in the Loins of *Adam*. Now may it say, O my backsliding Soul, hath not the blessed Redeemer of poor loveless Sinners, said in *Luke 15*. That the Blessed Father will *run* to receive such a backsliding wretch as thou art? He will *fall on his neck and kiss him*, and call to the Angels to *rejoyce at his Return*. And then may the Soul add, and shall

shall not he that dwelt in the bosom of the Father from eternity, be credited by thy Soul ?

3. A third Engagement upon God the Spirit may or doth remember the Soul of is, That every Soul that will and shall embrace the precious Gospel-discoveries, is chosen from eternity into the Order of Royal Priesthood, whereof Jesus Christ himself is Head or High Priest. Thence we are said to be *Kings and Priests unto God*, Rev. 16. And to be *a Royal Priesthood*, 1 Pet. 2. 9. Now from hence the Soul through believing, may discern God engaged to fulfill to the uttermost all the precious Gospel-discoveries to every Soul that shall accept them.

1. Thereby God is engaged by his dearest love to his own delight and contentment in the ministration of all his holy things here below, to make the person of every Soul that shall accept Gospel-discoveries, to be compleatly acceptable and well pleasing in his own eyes. The delight of the Lord in every act of his own Worship, hath its primary dependence upon the delight that the Lord takes in the Worshippers, as in *Mal. 1. 10*. Saith the Lord to them, *I have no pleasure in you, neither will I accept an offering at your hand* : Their persons were not amiable in Gods eyes, and therefore their offering could not be acceptable. And so it is said, *The Lord had respect to Abel, and to his Offering* : It was through the respect the Lord had to *Abel's* person, that he had any respect to his Offering. So that now seeing the Lord hath predestinated every such Soul accepting Gospel-discoveries, to be a Priest to minister to himself in all his holy things, should not the Lord make

The person of every such Soul compleatly acceptable in his own eyes, he must rob himself of all his Contentment and delight he should take in all his holy things here below.

2. Hereby the Lord is engaged by his tender care of preserving his holy things from pollution, to purifie, cleanse and sanctifie the most unclean polluted Soul that shall accept those Gospel-discoveries. Every approach to God with an uncircumcised heart, was accounted by God a pollution of his own Sanctuary, *Ezek. 44. 7.* And likewise the Lord accounts every approach to himself by an unregenerate and un sanctified heart, now in Gospel-times, to be a pollution of any Ordinance whatever that the soul maketh his approach to God in. This the Lord typically signified to his Church in its minority, in the manner of the consecrating the Priests to himself that were to offer those Legal Sacrifices, *Lev. 1. 6.* When *Moses* consecrated *Aaron and his Sons*, he *washed them*; which signified the cleansing of them from pollutions; the Lord intending to reveal this, that they were only sanctified, cleansed, purified hearts, who were suitable to offer any Spiritual Sacrifice, that should be acceptable in his eyes. Neither must you conceive this to be a bare revelation to Souls of what their hearts ought to be in their approach to God; but it is also a revelation what the Lord intended they should be, *through his mighty power working in their hearts.* Now hence the Spirit may give the Soul full security, concerning the fulfilling Gospel-discoveries to it, in its embracing and accepting them.

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1. When the heart is staggering and wavering, in regard of the want of all holy, enlivened, heavenly dispositions in his Spirit, and finding uncleanness and filthiness. The Spirit may here reveal the Lord to be engaged, that in case the polluted unclean heart of his shall accept Gospel-Discoveries, it shall be sanctified, cleansed, purified.

2. When the strength and tyrannizing power of any cursed Lust is causing the Soul to question whether love and mercy revealed for loveless sinners, that will accept it, should be made out to his Soul in his embracing it; The Spirit may here discover the Lord as well to be engaged in the Souls reliance upon him, to make him the Object of that love and mercy, to cleanse his Soul from that cursed pollution, to deliver it from under the tyranny of such a hellish disposition, as well as to be engaged to make out love and mercy to the Soul in any other kind whatever.

4. A Fourth Engagement the Lord hath laid upon himself for the fulfilling Gospel-discoveries, is this; That every Soul accepting those Gospel-discoveries, is the peculiar chosen Vessel of the Lords most superlative mercies and compassions. This you may see in *Rom. 9. 23. That he might make known the riches of his Glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory.* You may observe that every called Soul, that is, every Soul answering those sweet, Soul-melting invitations of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, is here affirmed to be a *Vessel of mercy prepared* by God himself from eternity for that very end. Now from hence the Spirit may give abundant security to the questioning

striving scrupulous Soul, of the infallible fulfilling of all the Gospel-discoveries to every Soul that shall embrace them.

1. Herein the Spirit may manifest the Lord to be engaged by his intire and infinite love, to his own glory and mercy, to redeem and deliver every Soul that is plunged into the most bottomless depth of sin and misery, if he will and shall accept those precious Gospel-discoveries to it. So that the Lord through his own admirable contrivance of his design of love towards loveless forlorn sinners, hath so interested himself in the perfecting of that precious design, that he stands engaged as strongly and powerfully to give perfect redemption and deliverance to lost sinners, that shall embrace Gospel-discoveries, as he stands engaged to maintain and support the honour of those his glorious Attributes of his own mercy and compassion.

Now there are three things wherein the honour of the Lords mercy consists.

First, In the free workings of it towards the most miserable objects, that are the most unworthy of any pitty and compassion that can be imagined.

Secondly, In the transcendency of its operations or motions.

Thirdly, In the infinite Almighty power of its workings, towards such unworthy objects of it. Thats thus, it hath such an Almighty power in it, not only to succour and relieve those perishing undone ones in their misery, but also to confer the highest degree of all happiness upon them. Now the honour of the Lords mercy and compassion consisting in this; hence the Lord stands engaged by his

his dearest love, to that honour of this his mercy, to give perfect redemption to the Soul, that is plunged in the most unfathomed depth of sin and misery, if the Soul shall and will embrace those Gospel-discoveries.

2. Hence the Spirit may manifest the Lord to be engaged, by the inseparable properties of his Divine nature, to communicate a fulness of all mercy and compassion, to every Soul accepting those Gospel-discoveries. The Essential property of the Divine nature, is to be issuing forth the bottomless depths of perfection that are included in it, into the bosom of poor needy empty penurious ones. It is as natural to the Divine nature to be communicating of its own perfections, as it is natural for the Sun to send forth its own pretious raies: And then this being the very nature of the Essence and being of any good, by how much the higher the goodness of any thing is, by so much the more strongly is it inclined and disposed to the communicating of himself: So that goodness it self in its perfection, being in the Divine nature, thence it is that it is the inseparable property of the Divine nature to be communicating all its perfections, so far as they are communicable. Now thence the Spirit may cause the Soul to conclude, that seeing it is the property of the Divine nature to communicate all its perfections, (so far as they can be communicable) and also seeing every Soul embracing Gospel-discoveries, is the proper object to which that perfection of the Lords mercy and compassion is to be communicated; thence the Spirit may cause the Soul to conclude, that the Lord stands engaged by the inseparable property of his
Divine

Divine nature, to make every such Soul accepting Gospel discoveries, to be the object of the highest mercy and compassion.

Now from hence the Spirit may give the Soul full security, of the fulfilling the Gospel discoveries into his bosom, whatever objections it is possible for the wisdom of Hell and the corrupt Heart to make against it: All the objections that are possible to be imagined, by the extract and quintessence of all Wisdom that is enmity against God, say no more but this concerning the Soul, that it is a miserable lost undone Soul: If the Soul objects the superlative height of his own wickedness, if it ~~is~~ object the long continuance in its wickedness, if it object the wretched contempt of mercy and love tendered, if it object the want of holiness, the want of every good disposition imaginable; if it object the most cursed crookedness and enmity of Heart against the blessed tenders of love, and begin to draw these conclusions from these premises; therefore surely Gospel discoveries cannot be fulfilled into my bosom, if I should rely upon the Lord for the fulfilling of them; yet the Soul in all these objections says but this one thing, I am a poor miserable despicable wretch in the depth of misery: Now then the Spirit may manifest to the Soul, that in its accepting those Gospel discoveries, it shall be the proper object of all mercy and compassions: So that God shall be engaged by the inseparable property of his own nature, to let out his transcendent bowels of mercy and compassion, in their freedom of working towards the Soul, so as to fill it with the fulness of mercy and compassion: And thence the Spirit may convince the Soul, that

that either he must conclude that his finite misery exceeds the infiniteness of the Lords mercies and compassions, or else the Soul must conclude that notwithstanding all objections that can be imagined, yet in his accepting the Gospel discoveries, they shall infallibly be fulfilled to the utmost into his bosom.

3. Hereby the Spirit may manifest the Lord to be engaged by all his sweetest contentments, his most pleasing delight that he naturally takes, in beholding the workings of his own perfections towards poor imperfect creatures, to supply every want that can possibly be imagined to be in any Soul. As it is the property of the Lords nature to be dispensing of his fulness to empty ones; so it is the Lords infinite delight to behold those streams of his fulness, running down in a futable way into their Souls. Now the Spirit may manifest the Lord to be engaged, by that his own contentment that he naturally takes in beholding his own perfections communicated unto others, to communicate all futable succour, relief, help and comfort, to every such Soul as shall embrace those Gospel discoveries.

5. A fifth engagement the Lord hath laid upon himself, to fulfill Gospel discoveries is, That every particular Soul that shall and will embrace Gospel discoveries, is the peculiar chosen object of the Lords highest, most unspeakable, everlasting delight and contentment. Thence it is that the Word reveals that the Lord taketh such infinite pleasure in his own, as in *Psal. 147. 11. The Lord taketh pleasure in those that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy: I pray observe it, in this is comprehended every*

every Soul that doth in the lowest degree embrace Gospel discoveries: This manifests that the Soul that doth in the most trembling timorous way, but reach out a feeble Hand of hope to lay hold upon that rich mercy tendered in the Lord Jesus to it, is the object of the Lords pleasure and contentment, even those Souls that are far from drawing any conclusion, only they cast out the anchor of hope, and venture their lost perishing Souls upon the rock of mercy that is discovered in the Lord Jesus.

1. The Spirit may reveal them to be the object of the highest most superlative everlasting delight and contentment; that is, the object of the highest delight that God takes in any object out of himself: The same superlative delight that the Father takes in Jesus Christ as Mediator, he takes in the Soul united to him.

2. Every such Soul is destined to be the object wherein the Lord would as it were concenter together in one, all the blessed motions of his own delight and contentment. Jesus Christ mystically considered, that is, considered with his Body of holy Angels, and Souls of those that were lost sinners united to him, is the very center wherein all the lines of the Lords delight and contentment meet perfectly together in one: Now every Soul embracing Gospel discoveries, being taken into the perfect unity of the mystical Body, becomes through its union into the mystical Body, as it were a part of the center wherein all the lines of the delight of God meet together.

There are four kinds of the Lords delight, that every such Soul that embraceth Gospel discoveries, is the chosen object of.

1. Every

1. Every such Soul is the chosen object of all the highest everlasting delight of God, that he takes in the letting out his love in its perfection towards any thing without himself. The Lords most natural peculiar delight is in love, because his Essence and being is love. Now every such Soul is the chosen object of the highest perfection of love, considered as one of that mystical Body: Hence it is said, *Zeph. 3. 17. He will rejoyce over thee with joy, he will rest in his love*; that is to say, he will take satisfaction and contentment to his own Soul in loving of thee; for indeed delight is nothing else but love in rest, as desire is love in motion.

2. Every such Soul so considered, is the object of all the most superlative delight of God, that he takes in the actual communication of his goodness. It is so natural for God who is goodness it self, to be communicating his goodness to others, that his Soul is filled with pleasure and contentment, in the letting forth of his goodness.

3. Every such Soul embracing Gospel discoveries, is the object of all the delights and contentments that the Lord takes in himself, in the contemplation of the transcendent glory of his own supereminent excellency. Now there are no other objects than that mystical Body of Christ, that are the objects of any of the delights of God, that he takes from the contemplation of his own superlative glory, seeing his own excellencies that he contemplateth upon, are no other then he communicateth to that mystical Body; So that all the delight, pleasure and contentment that the Lord can receive from the pretious views of the brightness of his own glory, when he looks out of his
own

own bosom, it must arise only from that mystical Body; and so consequently the mystical Body, being looked upon but as one, with one single Eye, every Soul in that mystical Body, may in the same sense be said to be the object of all the delight of God.

4. Every such Soul as shall and will accept Gospel-discoveries, is the peculiar object of all the delights and contentments of God, that he takes from the contemplation of the result of the mystical workings of his own wisdom, in the disposing of all things from the creation of the World, to its final dissolution. It is the property of God to reflect as it were upon the workings of his own attributes, as he did upon the whole world when he had made it, to behold how good it was, that he might delight himself in beholding the workings of his own excellency. Now the Lord only beholds the result of the admirable workings of all his attributes, in that mystical Body of Christ: And so consequently the mystical Body only, is the object of his delight that he takes, in the result and issue and consequence of the working of all his attributes. Now the Spirit may and doth reveal from hence, that there are firm engagements laid upon God himself, to fulfil whatever the Gospel discovers to every Soul that shall embrace him.

1. Hence God is engaged by his express Love to the content and satisfaction of his Soul, to let out his Love in the most absolute, compleat, perfect, divine, unspeakable workings of it, to every loveless sinner, that doth embrace and accept Gospel-discoveries. So that from hence consequently the Lord stands engaged,

First,

First, To let out his love to work freely with out motive, incentive, or argument inclining his love, to work towards every such Soul embracing Gospel Discoveries. The freedom of the working of his love towards souls, is one of the Divine Glorious Perfections of love, and should that be wanting, some degree of the Lords own delight and contentment, that he hath resolved to receive from every such soul to himself, must also be wanting.

Secondly, Thence the Lord stands engaged to let out his love wonderfully, beyond the comprehension of Men and Angels.

Thirdly, Thence he is engaged to let out the Discoveries of his love, to such souls as shall embrace Gospel Discoveries, fully, and compleatly, to the satisfaction of the soul.

Fourthly, From hence also the Lord is engaged to let out his love, to work infinitely without measure, to every soul that shall embrace these Gospel Discoveries. The love of God is but God himself, and therefore works not according to its perfection, till it works infinitely. Now from hence,

1. Here is full security that the spirit may give any doubting Soul, concerning the fulfilling of the Gospel Discoveries into his bosom, in his embracing of it, when the soul doth doubt because of the indisposedness of his spirit, to any duty that the Lord requires of him, and because of his inability to those duties.

2. Hence the spirit may give full security to the Wavering Unstable soul, who stands trembling lest he should presume, in casting his Forlorn Loveless soul into those everlasting arms of Love, because of the abominable Perverseness, and Crookedness of his Heart against God in all things. Y 3. Hence

3. Hence the Spirit may give security to any wavering Soul, whose hands as it were shake and quiver, and dare not with any confidence grasp the blessed tender of Union and Communion with the Lord through Christ, because of his wretched abuse of the precious working of the Lords love towards him in Christ already.

II. Hence also the spirit may reveal the Lord to be engaged, by the same dearest love to his own delight and satisfaction, to dispose every soul that shall embrace Gospel Discoveries, into a capacity for the injoyment of nearest, most absolute, intire Communion with himself. Under this particular, the Spirit may reveal the Lord to be engaged to these three things.

1. To remove all the opposition unto Communion with him, that remains in any heart, to Suppress, Overpower, yea to Heal all the Crookedness, and all the Averseness of any Heart embracing Gospel Discoveries.

2. Hence the spirit may reveal the Lord to be engaged to infuse into the Soul such Dispositions, as shall be fully, compleatly sutable to his own nature, so as to make so blessed a concurrence, between his own purest nature, and the Souls Corrupt nature; as that there should be nothing in the nature of God himself opposite to the Souls Disposition, nor nothing in the Souls Disposition or nature opposite unto God.

3. In this the Spirit may reveal the Lord to be engaged to heighten, or elevate and enlarge the faculties of the Soul, that are to receive those Communications and Influences from God. Now what abundant security may the Spirit give to
any

any soul that trembles to embrace Gospel Discoveries, against fears !

1. What security may the Spirit give to Souls, fearing to give credit to those Gospel Discoveries, because of the Averseness and Contrariety of their Spirits unto Communion with God ! Hence the Spirit may say to every Soul without exception, that shall embrace Gospel Discoveries, it is a chosen object of the highest eternal delight of God, in the Communication of his goodness.

2. Hence the Spirit may give full security unto the Soul against all fears, because of the Unstability, and Fickleness of his Heart, in any degree of Communion once attained.

3. Hence the Spirit may give security fearing that the Gospel Discoveries may not be Grasped and Embraced by the soul, because of the Straitness and Narrowness of his Heart, void of all Thirstings and Longings, yea of all Desires. The Spirit may hence declare the Lord to be engaged, by his love to the pleasure of his own Soul, to enlarge every such Heart to a kind of infinite Capacity for Communion.

III. Thence the Lord is engaged by his infinite Valuation and Estimation of the delightful Contemplation of his own Transcendent Excellencies (as they sparkle forth from the creatures) to effect the neereft, most intire Union of likeness that is possible, between himself and every such Sinner that shall embrace Gospel Discoveries. The Lord stands engaged by this, to make every such Soul a Partaker of his own Spotless Purity, and Holiness, yea to make it Participate of his Divine Nature, of his own life, so as the same life that dwells in himself, and that

Y 2

himself

himself lives by, should also dwell in every such Sinful Soul embracing those Gospel Discoveries. Nay the Engagement is so Invincible, that if the Lord should not Communicate the highest degree of his Communicable Perfection to every such Loveless Forlorn Sinner, as shall and will embrace Gospel Discoveries, he should bereave himself of that sweetest Pleasure and Contentment, that his Soul takes in the Contemplation of the Beams of his own Glory, seeing every such Soul is the chosen object, in whom the Lord determines from eternity to delight himself, by the sparkling forth of his own Glory through it.

VI. A sixth Engagement that God hath laid upon himself to fulfil Gospel Discoveries is this, That every unlovely Sinner that shall embrace them is prepared from Eternity by the Lords infinite Wisdom, to be an Orient bright shining Pearl in the all beautiful Crown of the Lords accidental Glory. Mistake me not, the mighty Sun of the Lords infinite essential Glory, cannot admit either of Augmentation or Diminution, I mean, either of Lessening or Increasing its Transcendent Brightness: But the Lords accidental Glory, that is to say, the manifestation and Discovery of those precious Beams of his essential Glory, may and do admit of Eclipses and Overshadowings, and also of an increase and augmentation in their Brightness and Excellency. Now every Forlorn Soul that shall embrace Gospel Discoveries, is laid as it were as a precious Golden Thred, in that rich Brodered Robe of that Glory, that the King of Heaven Cloathshimself with, to make himself Glorious in the eyes of Saints and Angels. This is clearly manifested in *Isa.* 43. 6, 7, if you compare it with

John

John 1. 12, Bring forth my Sons and Daughters, saith God, whom I have Created for my Glory; Now they are only those that receive the Lord Jesus tendred in the Gospel; To as many as received him, even to them that believe in him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God. And hence you shall observe, that the people of God are not only said to be Created for his Glory, but they are called *his glory*, *Isa. 46. 13.* Nay more, they are called *the Crown of the Lords Glory*, *Isa. 62. 3.* Nay further the Lord looks upon them as his *Ornament*, *Ezek. 7. 10.* And hence also they are called *the Portion of God*, *Jer. 12. 10.* Yea hence the Scripture declares the Saints in Heaven to *shine as the Stars in the Firmament*, *Dan. 12. 3.* In regard they shall be very Bright Shining Pearls that shall stand in the Crown of the Lords Honour. Now there are three respects, wherein every such Unlovely Sinner embracing Gospel Discoveries is one of the set Pearls that shine forth in the Crown of the Lords Glory.

1. In regard the Allbeautiful Unparalleld Crown of the superadded Honour of the Lord Jesus, is Composed of all those Souls that shall embrace those Gospel Discoveries. Thence it is, that such Gospel Embraces are called *the Glory of Christ*, *2 Cor. 8. 23.* And thence it is that the Church (which is the Company of those) is called *the fulness of Christ*. *Eph. 1. 23.* Now the Honour of Jesus Christ, through the perfect Unity between the Father and the Son, is also the Fathers Honour; and so consequently every such Soul being one of those Beautiful Flowers in the Garland of Christs Honour, he becomes also one of those rich Diamonds wherewith the Crown of the Fathers Glory is richly beset. According to that in

1 Cor. 3. 22, 23. where the whole Glory that Jesus Christ attains as he is Mediatour, is revealed to be Terminated and ended in the Fathers Glory. [*All is yours*] That is, all things are finally for your sakes; Or rather all things have a natural tendency through the Everlasting Decree of God, unto your good. And [*ye are Christs*] That is, and all you by vertue of the same Decree, have a natural tendency to all the good you attain unto, the good of Jesus Christ: All the Glory that is put upon you, hath a natural tendency unto the Glory of Jesus Christ, to make up the perfection of his Glory. And then observe, and saith he [*Christ is Gods*] That is, all the Good, the Glory, the Honour that Jesus Christ attains, through his being the Center wherein all your good meets all that meets in the Father; that is all his Honour tends only to the exalting of the Fathers Honour.

2. In regard the brightest Beams of the Fathers essential Glory are manifest in every such Soul. The Lord from before the Foundations of the World were laid, made choice of those Souls to be as so many Christal Glasses, through which the Beams of his Incomprehensible Essential Glory should shine forth.

First, In every such Soul is manifest, the infinite Unsearchable depths of the Fathers Divine Wisdom. The manner of the Fathers Disposing of those souls, to suffer them by the free working of their own Wills to lose themselves, and bring themselves under the Power of everlasting Wrath and Indignation, and then his Wisdom in contriving a way to save the Honour of his own Justice, and the Redemption of those Poor, Lost, Perishing Souls, so wonderfully, to make the Honour of Mercy and Love and Justice to meet

meet together in one, to make Mercy and Justice kiss each other, is that which will be the matter of Admiration to all those Inhabitants of the Sacred Palace of Heaven to all Eternity.

Secondly, The Brightest Beams of his unspeakable, unconceivable love appear, and are manifested to every such Soul. The highest perfection of Love that ever the Lord manifested, is in Loving such Unlovely, Forlorn, Loathsome Souls as these, and that also while he Rejected and Disregarded Creatures far more Glorious according to their first Creation.

Thirdly, The Almighty Power of the Lord is also Gloriously manifested in every such Soul, in that he should create anew those Loveless Sinners that were opposite to their own new Creation, I mean their own Regeneration. Therein indeed did Power appear, in that the Lord did raise the Soul from the lowest degree of Enmity, into the neereſt Union with himself, and that against all the Oppositions that Hell can make, and against all the Powers of the Soul it self, when both concur together against God.

Fourthly, The Glorious Independency of the Lords Will, in all the Motions and Operations of it, is manifested abundantly in every such soul. The Freedom of the Lord in all his ways, doth not shine forth so clearly in any of the Works of God, as in that Pretious Mystery of his Election, in making of the same lump one Vessel to Honour, and another to Dishonour, there being no Engagements, no Motives to incline his Pretious Will either this way or that way.

3. Every such Soul is a set shining Diamond in the Crown of the Lords Honour, In regard it is destined from Eternity, to stand as a constant clear Chri-

stal Glass, through which the Lord would manifest the Transcendency of his own perfection unto all Eternity. And it is through those Communications of the Father unto the Soul, that the Fathers Glory is discovered, and thence it is that the Brightness of the Fathers Glory shall be shining forth Resplendently unto all Eternity in every such Soul. Now we are to consider what full security the Spirit may give from hence to every such Soul, concerning the Infalible fulfilling of all Gospel Discoveries to the utmost, into its Bottom that shall embrace them.

1. From thence the Spirit may reveal to the Soul, that the Lord stands engaged by the Inseparable Disposition of his own nature, (which naturally tends to his own Glory) to Compleat and Perfect an Union between the Lord Jesus, and every Loveless Sinner that shall embrace Gospel Discoveries. The Crown of the Fathers Glory being but the Issue and Result of the Glory of the Lord Jesus, and then the Glory of Christ having its full and sole Dependence upon the compleat Union of all those with himself, that shall embrace the Gospel, thence the Father stands engaged to Perfect and Compleat that Union between Christ and all those Souls; seeing his natural Disposition doth necessarily incline him, to be compleating the Crown of his own Glory.

2. The spirit may reveal to the Soul, that the Lord stands engaged by the property of his own precious Nature, to Love Compleatly and Perfectly every Gospel Embracer, without the least Dependence upon any thing in the Soul, or any thing to be done by the Soul. Now what abundant security may every Soul, Trembling and Fearing least the Lord should

should not be willing to accept it into Union and Communion with himself, receive from hence against all his fears !

3. From this consideration the Lord stands engaged, by all his tender respects to the bright Shining Splendor of his own Imperial Crown, to Beautify and Adorn every Forlorn Sinner Embracing Gospel Discoveries, with the most Glistering Beams of his own Matchless Perfection, that can be comprehended by any Finite Creature. Now Gospel Embracers being chosen by the Lord from Eternity, to be the precious matter whereof he will Compose that his everlasting Crown of Glory, whereby his Honour and Majesty should Glitter forth before the eyes of Saints and Angels, brighter than ten Thousand Suns in their Strength ; Thence if every Gospel Embracer shall not be Beautified and adorned with the most Sparkling touch of Perfection that they are Capable of, the Blessed Majesty of Heaven should become negligent of Dignifying himself with the Brightness of Majesty and Honour, through the Transparent Brightness of his Imperial Crown of Glory. And therefore according to this,

1. The Scripture reveals, that the Celestial Glory and Surpassing Excellency, wherewith every Gospel Embracer shall be Adorned and Beautified, doth Transcend and go beyond all Comprehension of Finite Brains and Created Understandings : According to that in 1 Cor. 2. 9. *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the Heart of Man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love him* : Mark what the Apostle affirms ; He affirms that the Sublime Mysterious Workings of Heavenly Wisdom about Gospel Embracers, was never Comprehended

prehended yet with any finite brain by any mortal heart: and O how infinitely unconceivable then are the workings of that heavenly wisdom in themselves! Alas what the Gospel reveals of them, is but like a small reflection of the Sun beams to the Sun it self, It is but a small grain to a golden Mine, it is but a drop of the bucket to the great Ocean: O then how great an exaltation of such unlovely Sinners to most superlative perfection and unconceivable glory, must needs be the effect of such a depth of heavenly divine wisdom being imployed about them from eternity! This depth of the mystery of divine wisdom about Gospel embracers was never fathomed by Angelical Understandings, 1 Pet. 1. 12. *which things the Angels desire to look into*, saith the Original *ἧτα* Into which things the Angels earnestly with all their strength and intention of mind desire to look into: The word signifies such a looking into things, as to stoop down with the head, and bow down with the body, that it might be the thing it looks upon to discern it fully. It is the same word the Apostle useth, John 20. 11. concerning *Mary Magdalen*, she stooped down and looked into the Sepulchre, that she might see narrowly into the thing.

(2.) The Scripture reveals more particularly, that most unconceivable perfection, most celestial glory, shall be put upon the persons of Gospel-embracers in every part, power and faculty that belongs to them.

I. According to this Engagement of God, he resolves that the very bodies of Gospel-embracers shall be beautified, and indued with most transcendent, bright, shining glory, with almost incomparable perfection. That one Scripture is enough to clear it out,

Phil.

Phil. 3. 21. He shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. O how did the quintessence of all perfection meet together in the glorious body of Christ! You may remember in the Transfiguration of Christ, which was but a glimpse of his beauty and glory, the hearts of *Peter* and *John* were amazed, their Souls were ravished to behold it, they were transported beyond themselves, and began to cry out, *let us make Tabernacles*, Let us dwell here to behold this Glory for ever: But how much more transcendently excellent is the Glory of the Body of Jesus Christ, now he is exalted to all Glory! And yet the Bodies of Gospel Embracers must be like his Glorious Body.

1. All Privative Perfection shall be put upon them. An everlasting Exemption and perfect Freedom from all Defects and Imperfections, all Infirmities and Deformities, all Pains, Perplexities, Ministries, so as there shall be no necessity of the Aid and Assistance of their fellow Creatures, to support and uphold, to relieve and Refresh them as there is here below, but their Bodies shall be like Angels.
Mat. 22. 30.

2. The Scripture reveals that there shall be most admirable Positive Perfection put upon them; Immortality it self: their lives shall be extended to duration, equal with the Life of the eternal God, they shall run Parallel with the Life of God in the longest lines of Eternity. *1 Cor. 15. 54. This mortal shall put on immortality.*

3. They shall be indued with Incorruptibleness. They shall in a manner be made impassive, not being made capable of any passion, by any corrupt quality. *1 Cor. 15. 42. It is Sown in Corruption, it is Raised in Incorruption.*

4. They

4. They shall be indued with almost Incredible Angelical Power, Potency, Might and Strength. They shall be made every way suitable to the desire of the Souls themselves, and made suitable for the Soul to act in the highest way, in the most Sublime way of Operation, without Weariness, without Interruption, without Intermission, They shall be able to bear the infinite weight of Glory, the least drop whereof they are not able to bear for the present.

5. The body shall be indued with most excellent Spirituality. *1 Cor. 15. 44. It is Sown a Natural Body, it is Raised a Spiritual Body:* They shall not be turned into spirits, but the Body shall be made so spiritual, through the fulness of the spirit in it, that it shall be as ready to the Blessed Will of God in every thing, as the soul it self that shall be purely Holy: And also it shall have a Wonderful Nimbleness, and Agility, and Activeness, to be able at the souls desire, to move higher or thither with most Incredible speed.

6. The Scripture reveals, the very Perfection and Quintessence of Beauty it self, shall be put upon the Vilest of the Bodies of the Gospel Embracers. *1 Cor. 15. 43. It is Sown in Dishonour, it is Raised in Glory, it is Sown in Weakness, it is Raised in Power:* There shall be the exactest Form and Feature, the Perfection of Comeliness and sweet Proportion, a most admirable Congruent Symmetry of all the parts, there shall be the sweetest pleasing mixture of the loveliest Colour of Red and White, there shall be a continual actuating to the Life both these Colours and Parts, so as they shall be Preserved in a perpetual Orient Freshness; yea the Materials of Beauty, through the Unspeakable Chearfulness of the Heart
within

within, and through the admirable excellency that the Soul shall be raised to, shall be so actuated to the very Life, that the very Beauty of the Body shall Sparkle and Glitter, as Bright as the Brightest Glistering Beam of the Sun in the Firmament, *Dan.*

12. 3.

II. The Scripture reveals the highest perfection to be put upon their Souls. It were a work infinite and endless to search into the various, glorious excellency and faculties, wherewith every Soul embracing Gospel Discoveries shall be endued: Our capacities are narrow here concerning the Soul, we know little of it and of its Original, yet thus much we may affirm of it from the Scripture, that every faculty of the Soul shall be adorned with the most suitable perfection and excellency that it is capable of: The understanding shall be extraordinarily and supernaturally irradiated with the highest illumination, the largest comprehension: The Will shall be extended to the most perfect operation towards God himself, all the motions of it working in their perfection terminatively upon God alone, which indeed is the very perfection of holiness: So as the height of the Souls perfection shall be every way answerable, and proportioned to the superexcellent glory, wherewith their bodies shall be indued and adorned.

III. From what the Scripture reveals concerning the beautifying the body with such high perfections, and the beautifying of the Soul also, I may add a word by consequence: That a most admirable, unspeakable glory, shall appear in the persons of those Gospel-embracers, when a body filled with such perfection, and a soul raised in a manner infinitely higher, shall be united into one, to make up one person: O what
Honour

Honour and Majesty will shine from the very countenance of such a Person ! When *Stephen* stood before the Face of the Council, through a sweet Vision of Heaven opened, his Countenance appeared like the Face of an Angel : But O what Beams of Majesty, Honour, Beauty, and Glory, will Glitter from the Persons of Gospel Embracers, when they shall be Inhabitants in the Palace of Heaven itself ! Now all this admirable Perfection, wherewith every Sinner Embracing Gospel Discoveries shall thus be Cloathed, is but the Effect and Consequence of the Precious, Eternal Determination of God, to make every Unlovely Sinner Embracing Gospel Discoveries, to be as one of the Diamonds that should stand to glitter in the Crown of his own Glory.

7. There is a Seventh Ingagement, that the Spirit also may reveal the Lord to have laid upon himself, in respect of himself, to fulfill all Gospel-discoveries into the bosom of every unlovely Sinner that shall embrace him, and that is this ; every such unlovely sinner, that shall and will accept the Gospel-Discovery, is chosen from Eternity to be a Royal Inhabitant of the Sacred Palace of the Empyrean Heaven, there to attend the Majesty of Heaven perpetually, to behold the Brightness of his Glory and Majesty. When the Lord who from Eternity subsisted only in himself, did please from the Motions of his own Will alone to create a World, to be a goodly Theatre wherein he would manifest his Power, Bounty, Goodness, and Love, then did that Blessed Majesty please to Compose on purpose that Vast Empyrean Heaven, and to Beautify and Adorn it with the most Exquisite Excellency, and Transcendent Glory, to make it shine with the Brightest Beams of Majesty

Majesty and Glory, that it might be a Sacred Pa-
 lace for himself, wherein he resolves to Communi-
 cate himself most Beatifically, to the Noblest
 Creatures, Elect Saints and Angels, and wherein he
 purposeth to discover the most Transparent Beams
 of his unspeakable Majesty and Glory that ever
 Creature should behold: Now in like manner the
 Lord also determined, that every of the Souls of
 Mankind, (whom he foresaw should fall into a pe-
 rishing lost condition) accepting union and Commu-
 nion with himself, should be one of his Houshold
 Servants, admitted into his Blessed Presence-Cham-
 ber, in whom he would delight himself, by Reveal-
 ing his Incomprehensible Glory. Hence it is that
 you shall find in Scripture, that the *Kingdom* is said
 to be given to those Gospel Embracers. *Luke 12. 32.*
 And hence it is that the Saints are said to have an *In-*
heritance Incorruptible, that Fadeth not away, 1 Pet.
3. 4. And hence it is also that every Gospel Embra-
 cer is said to be an *Heir of Heaven, Rom. 8. 17,* And
Heirs of a Kingdom. Jam. 2. 5. All these Scriptures
 Compared together, abundantly evidence, that e-
 very such Gospel Embracer, is chosen to be a Royal
 Inhabitant of the Sacred Palace of the Empyrean
 Heaven. Now that they are chosen to dwell there
 on purpose, that they might attend, and behold the
 Beauty of his own Majesty and Glory, this is a-
 bundantly evidenced from many Scriptures; Christ
 himself speaks it in *John 17. 24. Father I will that*
they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am,
that they may behold my Glory which thou hast given
me. Now the Glory of Jesus Christ is so Interwo-
 ven with the Glory of the Father, that they cannot
 be the Beholders of the Glory of Christ, except they
 be

be also Beholders of the Glory of God the Father. And again in that 1 John 3. 8. *Now we are the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* So that from these Scriptures joyntly considered, we may conclude,

I. That every Gospel Embracer is chosen, to behold the Brightness of his Majesty and Glory, by beholding the Divine Essence it self.

1. He is chosen to behold the Blessed sweet Simplicity, and Indivisible Unity of the Godhead. To discern the Lord, and to see him to be as one most Pure Simple Act.

2. Every Gospel Embracer is chosen to behold the Sacred, and Secret Mystery of the Holy Trinity. To behold that one Indivisible Essence of God, consisting in three manner of ways; To see three Substences and but the same Essence.

3. Every such Soul is chosen to behold the Eminency of the Divine Essence. They are chosen to behold a Transcendency of all Imaginable Perfection that ever their eyes beheld, to be Comprised in that one Divine Essence with absolute Perfection.

4. They are chosen to behold the Divine Essence, in all its most Glorious Operations. They are chosen to be admitted into the Presence-Chamber of the Divine Majesty, so as to behold all the Records of Heaven.

II. Every such Soul is chosen perpetually to behold the Brightness of his Majesty and Glory, in Beholding the Glory of Jesus Christ as Mediator.

1. They

1. They are chosen to behold the admirable Mystery, of the Union of the Divine Person to the Humane Nature. That which is now an Inexplicable Mystery to the Believers Eye, shall then by Gods choosing them to behold his Glory, be Discerned.

2. It is chosen to behold all the bright Beams of Glory, that appear in the Mystical Union of so many Lost, Rebellious, Sinking, Perishing Souls, to the Lord as to one Head.

3. Every such Soul is chosen to behold the Transcendent Perfection of the Secret Love of the Lord Jesus, to such Unlovely Sinners, while they were altogether Loveless, while they were altogether Abominable, matter of Loathing to his pure Eyes.

III. Every such Soul is chosen from Eternity, to attend upon the Royal Majesty of Heaven in his Sacred Palace, that they may behold his Glory in the Brightest manner.

1. He is chosen to behold those bright Beams of Majesty and Glory, in a positive way.

2. It is chosen to behold the Beams of his Transcendent Majesty and Glory in an immediate way. There will be no need of Speeches to Represent the Lord to our Understandings, as there is now.

3. It is chose to behold the Brightness of the Lords Majesty and Glory, in a Simple Pure way. Not relatively, or by Relations, as Gospel Embracers for present behold the Light of the Lords Glory: As when we conceive of the Glory of the Majesty of Heaven, we conceive of him as the most absolute Monarch of Heaven and Earth, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; This is but Relation, but

we shall then see the Lord in a futable way, even as he is.

4. It is chosen to behold them fully. Not to behold the Reflection only, but the Sun it self of Glory.

5. It is chosen to behold them everlastingly. Hence the Soul may discern God to be engaged, by his highest Relation of his own Eternal Contentment, to perfect both Union and Communion, between himself and every Unlovely Sinner, that shall and will accept Gospel Discoveries, seeing every such Soul as shall accept Gospel Discoveries, is Designed by himself from Eternity, to be one of his Royal Attendants in his Sacred Palace, that should behold the Brightness of his Majesty and Glory.

Now before I can pass from this second work of the Spirit upon Souls; There are Five or Six things that every Soul of us must remember, least we misunderstand the manner of the Spirits irradiating the Gospel unto Souls.

I. We must observe, That the Spirit of the Lord doth in a different manner, cause these Glorious Beams of Divine light, to shine forth from the promise into dark Souls. The Spirit in this Blessed work of Irradiation of the Gospel unto dark Souls, doth to some reveal only some of those Pretious Soul Ravishing Beams of Light, that you have heard opened; To others he causeth more abundance of those Pretious Beams of Light, to shine into the heart: And from hence, various Souls have various Degrees of this assurance of Faith, and various Degrees of Joy and Peace flowing forth from that assurance of Faith.

II. You

II. You must also observe concerning this work of Irradiation of the Gospel, That the Spirit doth manifest those Beams of Divine Light from the Gospel, in different Degrees of Clearness unto Souls.

III. You must also observe, that the Lord doth in a different degree continue the manifestation, and Irradiation of the Promise or of the Gospel unto different souls. I speak still of those souls that do receive through the spirits Irradiation of the Gospel, some assurance unto their Faith of their union with Christ.

IV. You must also understand, that the spirit doth reveal the substance of all this Heavenly Light, the Sum and Compendium of all that you have heard, and cause it to shine into souls from the promise. This the spirit doth cause to shine into every soul, that attains unto any degree of assurance of Faith: Though the spirit works variously, in regard of the clearness of revealing what it doth reveal, and variously in regard of the time and continuance of its manifestation of that Heavenly Light unto souls, yet those precious Beams of Heavenly Light, that the spirit causeth to Glitter forth from the promises unto souls, are of necessity to be revealed unto every soul that attains unto any assurance of Faith.

V. We must observe, that the spirit of the Lord doth out of his own infinite Wisdom, select the particular truth of the Gospel, whereby he will assure any particular soul of his union with Christ. Though those particular Beams of Divine Light mentioned, be in the substance revealed to the Faith of every soul to whom the spirit gives union, yet the particular wherein the spirit makes the Brightness, the Glory, the Lustre, the satisfying and Over-powering Glory

of those Beams of light to appear to the souls eye, these are selected by the Wisdom of the spirit it self, though it is but the substance also, or the effect of those particulars, whereby we have revealed those Beams of Divine Light to you.

VI. You must observe, that the spirit doth reveal or manifest, all the bright shining of Divine Light from the promise, at one and the same moment to the soul, when it draws forth the souls Faith unto acts of assurance. The spirit may be instructing the dark soul many Years, in the Pretious Mystery of the Gospel of Christ, before it raiseth the souls Faith unto assuring acts, and may be increasing the strength of the souls confidence gradually, in every Ordinance in all those years; But yet wherever the spirit draws out the ~~the~~ believing Dispositions, that it hath infused into any souls, to act by way of fulness of confidence, then the spirit presents all this Pretious Light of the Gospel at once, and gives the soul one Glorious view of it.

Thirdly the spirit of the Lord proceeds from Illumination of the soul, and Irradiation of the Gospel to the soul, to Conviction. From the Powerful Efficacy of that Divine light, infused into the understanding, and the Precious Concurrence of the sweetest light of manifestation of the Gospel unto the Light Inherent, ariseth a Powerful Inward Conviction of the Conscience: According to that in *John 16. 9, 10.* *The Spirit shall reprove, and convince the World of Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment: It shall [Convince the World of Righteousness,]* that is, of free Justification of Despicable, Forlorn, Guilty Sinners, through the

*The Spirits
Conviction
of the Conscience.*

the Lord Jesus alone. This Conviction of the soul or of the Conscience, it is a clear Unquestionable, and Infallible Demonstration, given by the spirit to the doubtful soul, of the Lords Will, that even that his particular Forlorn, Worthless, Stubborn soul, shall be received into the nearest union with himself in Christ. Or rather it is a Commanding Power of the Spirit of God, exercised upon the soul, whereby it constrains it to receive that clear Infallible Demonstration, that the Blessed Word of God gives of the Lords Will to receive his Stubborn, Rebellious, Unworthy Soul, into union with the Lord Jesus. Indeed by the Spirits Illumination, and the manifestation of the Gospel to the Soul, there is a most Unquestionable Demonstration given, of the Lords Will to accept any one particular soul to be one with him, if he will accept him: but in the Work of Conviction is most properly the Mighty Overpowring work of the spirit upon the Mind and Conscience, constraining it to receive the Demonstration. Conviction is properly the silencing all Cavils, Doubts, or Contradictions of the mind, against any truth propounded, and a making of it undeniable to it, that it dare not make any objection, or raise any one Cavil more, to what the Lord propounded to his particular Loveless soul, but to sit down satisfied, and confess the truth of what the Lord propounded to him, to confess that it is the Will of the Blessed God indeed, that it should be one with himself in the Lord Jesus, and enjoy everlasting Communion with him. There is a necessity of the Spirits thus convincing the Soul, besides its Illumination and its Irradiation of the Gospel to it, and that in two respects.

First in respect of the Mind, or Understanding.

And Secondly in respect of the Conscience.

First, In respect of the mind. The Power of Corruption hath so Captivated the Mind and Understanding, that both the Illumination of it, and Irradiation of the Gospel unto the mind would be Ineffectual, should not the spirit strike in to make up the souls Conviction. There is a four fold Disposition in the Mind, that doth cause a kind of necessity of this Conviction of the spirit, besides the Irradiation of the Gospel to the Mind.

I. There is a Wretched Unteachableness, that naturally possesseth all our Minds. There is not only Darkness possessing the mind, but an opposition against the receiving Light. Now in respect of this Disposition of our minds naturally, we are unapt to receive any thing the spirit reveals, should there not be a further Power and Efficacy of the spirit upon the Heart.

II. There is a most Superlative incredulity that remains in our minds. *The God of the World hath blinded the mind.* 2 Cor. 4. 4, not by a privative extinction of Light infused (that is beyond the Devils Power) but by a positive darkness, a positive Ignorance, by perswading the minds of all to believe other Principles, such as contradict those blessed Principles of Divine Truth. Now in respect of this Incredulity that possesses our Minds, there is a necessity that the Spirit should have a further work upon the soul than bare Illumination, and Manifestation of the Gospel to the soul.

III. There

III. There is an Indisposition in our Minds, to receive any thing that they cannot Comprehend. Now all the Glorious Discoveries in that Mystery of the Gospel of Jesus Christ being Incomprehensible, thence the mind would receive none of those Pretious Discoveries, though the Spirit did Irradiate the Gospel of the Lord Jesus to it, if another Mighty Power of the Spirit should not come in upon the Heart, to Convince the Soul of it.

IV. There is an absolute Enmity in the mind against those Divine Truths. *Rom. 8. 7.* The Carnal Mind is Enmity against God. Now this Cursed Enmity dwelling in the Unregenerate part, makes its constant Opposition with all its Power and Strength, against all that the Spirit reveals; And so all the Pretious Discoveries of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus to the Mind would be ineffectual, should not another Mighty Power of the Spirit come in to Conquer the Cursed Enmity, and to Constrain the Soul to receive those Demonstrations of the Will of God, to receive the Loveless Soul into union with himself as a thing undenyable.

Secondly there is a necessity of it in regard of the Conscience also.

The Conscience is a Register, Might and Power, placed by the Lord in the Understanding, to record all the Motions of the whole Man, and to Discover the Equity or Iniquity of them, and to determine of them either with the Soul, or against the Soul. Now the Conscience is also so Corrupted, that there is a necessity of this Conviction of the Spirit, besides this Illumination and Irradiation, *for the mind and Conscience is defiled, Titus 1. 15.*

What Conscience is.

Now there are two that are the most eminent Works of Conscience.

I. To Discover the Equity or Iniquity of any thing Propounded to the Soul to be done, or of any thing that is done by the Soul. Now in this the Conscience is dreadfully Corrupt, here the Conscience calls Iniquity Equity, and Equity Iniquity, calls Good Evil, and Evil Good, naturally in a great measure. Now thence there is necessity of this Conviction of the Spirit also, in regard the Conscience will never determine that it is good for the Soul, to receive those Pretious Discoveries of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to it, unless the Spirit Overpowers the Corrupted Conscience, and Convince it of the Equity of receiving it.

II. The second act of Conscience is, to determine of any thing that is already done by the Soul. Its work is to Accuse, and Excuse the Soul, both in its doing of things, and after the doing of them. Now Conscience is so dreadfully Corrupt naturally, that like a Corrupt Judge, or a Bribed Judge, it accuseth when it should Excuse, and Excuseth when it should Accuse, it Frees the Guilty, and Condemns the Innocent. Now in respect of this Corruption of the Conscience, though the Spirit of the Lord doth Illuminate the Soul in part (for its never higher) and then present the Gospel to the Enlightned Understanding, and gives clear Manifestations of the Lords Will, to admit the Soul into Union with himself in Christ; yet the Corrupt Conscience will never determine with the soul, to Excuse the Soul in receiving those Pretious Discoveries of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to it, but would and will perpetually Accuse the Soul as a Presumptuous Wretch, unless the Spirit of

of God should exercise this Convincing Power upon the Conscience, even after the work of the Irradiation of the Gospel to the Soul. So that this work of the Spirit in Conviction, draws clear unquestionable Demonstrations for the soul from the Gospel, to prove that it is an Infalible certainty, that it is the Lords Will to accept that Particular Despicable, Forlorn Sinner to be one with him; and it consists also in the Commanding Power of the Spirit of God upon the Determination, whereby it silenceth all Cavillings of the Soul, and puts a Holy Constraint upon the Mind and Conscience, to receive that Determination as True and Undeniyable: So that the Spirit maketh him to confess with his own Mouth, that it is the Will of the Blessed God, that even this my Forlorn, Loathsome, Despicable, Unlovely Soul, should be one with himself for ever. This is the Spirits Conviction, which is the third work of the Spirit upon the Soul, towards the drawing forth its Faith by way of assurance, or by which the Spirit doth proceed, to give the Soul a full assurance of his Union with Christ.

There is a fourth effect of the Spirit of God upon Hearts, for revealing to them their Union with Christ Certainly and Infalibly, so as to give the Demonstration, and that is the Spirits Excitation of the Habits of Grace formerly Infused, into their proper and peculiar Exercise. Now here you must observe, the Spirit doth not Quickens, Inliven, and Actuate all kind of Gracious Dispositions Infused into the Sanctified Soul, in any immediate Revelation; assuring its Faith of his Acceptance into Union with the Lord; For indeed the Souls assurance

The Spirits Excitation.

rance unto Faith, doth not properly arise from any of the actings of those Holy Dispositions that are Infused into it, but proceed only from the right Apprehension of the good Will of the Lord in Christ unto Loveless Sinners: For indeed the Spirit in this work of Excitation, as it stands in Relation to the assuring the Soul through Believing, of his Union with Christ, hath only and peculiarly, the Believing Disposition that was Infused into the Soul, at Christs first Comprehending the Soul, for its proper Object, and as Exercising Influences chiefly flow down from that believing Disposition: Now the Spirits Excitation of the Believing Disposition, doth necessarily follow the three former effects of the Spirit upon Hearts, in regard all these effects of the Spirit upon the heart, are but preparative to this fourth effect, for indeed it is this fourth effect, which is the Spirits drawing forth Believing Dispositions into act, which is the Formality of Assurance, or Assurance it self: The other only are absolutely necessary Preparatives unto the assurance, they are Preparations indeed both Privatively and Positively; But they are but Preparations.

First, These three acts of the Spirit are Preparations privatively, by preventing all Impediments and Obstructions, that hinder the Soul from acting Faith by way of assurance.

1. The first work of the Spirit which is its Illumination, that doth privatively prepare the Soul for the assuring act of Faith,

1. By preventing the Soul from bottoming its Confidence upon the Sands. Before the Blessed work of Illumination, souls mistake the right Bottom of their Confidence of the Lords accepting them into
Union

Union with Christ, and so consequently cast out the Anchor of their Souls, upon the ground of their own Humiliation for Sin; another time upon the Quicknings and Enlargings of their Hearts, through the Sanctifying Spirit, and so Consequently never entertain the least Confidence of the Lords accepting of them into Union with Christ, any further then they can discern those Quickning Enlargements and Inlivenings of that Sanctifying Spirit in their Hearts.

2. That doth prepare privatively for the assurance, by Preventing the Soul from seeking in a false manner after the attaining of Confidence upon a true bottom. Before the Spirits full Illumination, the Soul commonly mistakes, about the manner of casting out an Anchor of Confidence upon that true ground, as conceiving there is no right manner of any Souls casting himself with Confidence upon the Lord, unless the Soul doth first discern himself to be a Believer.

II. The second work also of the Spirits Irradiation of the Gospel unto Souls, is to prepare privatively for the assuring of the Souls Faith of his Union with Christ. Through the Spirits Irradiation, all Misapprehensions about the Tender of Union with Christ & ~~with~~ the Soul are removed.

III. By the Spirits Conviction the Soul is prepared Privatively, for the assuring his Faith of his union, and that three ways.

1. By removing of the Contrariety of the reasoning that possesses the Soul. Before the Spirits Irradiation of the Gospel in some Degree, and Conviction of the Conscience by that Irradiation, the Heart is haled hither and thither, by an Apprehension of reasoning that always dwells within him: The Heart sometimes Inclining to a Dreadful Conclusion, that the

the Lord will never accept of his Forlorn Soul into Union with the Lord Jesus : Another time again inclined to believe, that the Lord is willing to accept even his Soul into Union with Christ : Now by the Irradiation of the Gospel to the Soul, and the Spirits Conviction of the Conscience, the Contrariety of Reasoning in the soul is removed ; The Reasons for accepting the soul into Union with the Lord Jesus, bearing more weight with the spirit, than all the Objections and Contradictions that Hell, and the Corrupt Heart can make against it ; So that the soul discerns more ground to imagine, that the Lord is willing to accept his soul into Union with Christ, than he discerns ground to think the contrary.

2. Through the spirits Conviction, the Uproar and Tumult in the souls Affections are Allayed and Helped. Through the Contrariety of reasoning in the soul, all the Affections are put into a Tumult and Rage : When one kind of reasoning Prevails, then one kind of Affection works strongly, and when contrary Reasonings prevail, then contrary Affections work as highly.

3. The spirits Conviction that is annexed to the spirits Manifestation of the Gospel, doth prepare for the souls receiving assurance unto his Faith of his Union with Christ by removing the Distraction that possesses the souls thoughts. As the Affections commonly are in a Confusion, so the thoughts also, the mind is constant in nothing else but unconstancy, staying, or fixing upon nothing. Now this being a great Impediment to the souls receiving assurance unto his Faith of his Union with Christ, the spirit privately to prepare the soul for it, removes this Distemper.

Secondly

Secondly they are Preparations positively also.

I. The spirits work of Illumination, that doth prepare the subject for assurance. It is through that Illumination that the soul is disposed into a possible condition, and a capable condition, to discern that everlasting Rock of Ages, whereupon the Confidence of the souls union with Christ shall be cast.

II. The spirits Irradiation, or Manifestation of the Gospel, doth also prepare positively for the assuring the soul of his union with Christ, in regard that prepares the very matter of assurance. That Discovers the true ground, whereupon the soul may be Confident of his Acceptance into union.

III. The third work of the spirit which is Conviction, that prepares the soul for receiving the assurance unto his Faith of his union with Christ, by applying the matter of assurance particularly unto souls. It is the spirits manifestation of the Gospel, that Discovers the ground whereupon souls may be confident of their acceptance into union with Christ; It is the spirits Conviction, that makes particular application of that ground of Confidence. Those three former works of the spirit are only Preparative unto assurance, the Formality of assurance is still behind: Therefore the spirit comes with this fourth work, which is the Exciting and Stirring up this believing Disposition into Exercise.

Therefore now we must open to you what this Excitation of the Spirit is, and what the particular acts of the Spirit upon the soul are, that are Included under this work of the spirits Excitation of the believing Disposition unto its Operation.

The Spirits Excitation is a Gracious, Free, Extraordinary Concurrence of the spirit, with the believing Manifestation, formerly Infused into the Soul. Or it is a Precious, Powerful influence of the spirit, upon the believing

Disposition. The Holy Disposition that Inclines the Heart Habitually to believe, is as it were the Seed of assurance Sown in the Heart, but there must be the Concurrence of the Spirit with the Seed, or the Influence of the Spirit upon the Seed to make it Fructify, so as there shall be an act of assuring Faith in the Soul. So that this Excitation of the Spirit, or the Spirits stirring up the believing Disposition, is but a Continuance of that Holy Influence into the Soul, that was begun at the Souls first passive Union with the Lord Jesus, whereby the Holy Disposition that was then Infused, is Maintained, Preserved, Increased, Actuated and Enlivened.

Yet to open this more particularly.

I. I say it is a Gracious Concurrence of the Spirit with the believing Disposition. I do not call it a Gracious Presence of the Spirit, because the Spirit takes up its Everlasting Habitation in the Heart, at that passive Union between the Soul and Christ, that is, when it first Comprehends the Soul; and the Habitation of the Spirit may be said to be equal at all times in the Soul, but its Conveyance of Grace into the Soul is not always equal.

II. This Excitation of the Spirit to the believing Disposition, is a Gracious and Free Concurrence of the Spirit with the believing Disposition. Free, not only as other Holy Motions of the Spirit in the Heart are free, which is in respect of their sole Dependence

dance upon the free good Will of God to a Love-
 leſs Sinner ; But it is a free Concurrence of the Spirit
 to the believing Diſpoſition, in regard of the Lords
 absolute freedom that he Exercifeth in Vouchſafing
 this unto Souls. That I may ſpeak the more clearly,
 you muſt conceive there is a Two-fold Influence of
 the Spirit into believing Souls. The firſt is an abſo-
 lutely neceſſary Influence : The other is a more Free
 Arbitrary Influence. The absolute neceſſary Influ-
 ence is Two-fold.

Fiſt, That that's absolutely neceſſary to Maintain
 the Life of a believing Soul.

Secondly, That which is absolutely neceſſary
 to Maintain the Growth of a believing Soul.

1. The Influence of the Spirit that is absolutely
 neceſſary to Maintain the Life of the Believing Soul.
 Every Creatnre that hath any Life, hath ſome Main-
 tenance for that Life, which Maintenance being
 withdrawn, the Creatures Life would decay : How-
 ever do not miſtake me, every Living Creature muſt
 have ſome kind of Influence, from the firſt Being of
 Beings to maintain its Life : As the Angels have a
 more immediate Spiritual kind of Influence from God.
 Now that that the Wiſdom of the Lord hath Deter-
 mined, ſhould Maintain the Spiritual Life begotten
 in a believing Soul, is the Influence of the Holy ſpi-
 rit into the ſoul. Now this absolutely neceſſary In-
 fluence is that which is never wanting to any one Be-
 lieving ſoul : The Covenant of Grace that the Lord
 freely paſſeth to the believing ſoul, lays an Engage-
 ment upon the Bleſſed God, to maintain the Influ-
 ence of the Life of the ſoul ; So that the Bleſſed
 God of Heaven and Earth is no more at Liberty, in
 that he is Bound and Obligated to Maintain that Life
 he

he begets in a believing soul ; According to that in *Jer.* 32. 40. I will put my fear in their Hearts, and they shall not depart from me ; they shall never dye again a spiritual death.

2. The absolute necessary Influence of the spirit, is that which maintains the Growth of the believing soul toward Perfection. Now that Influence of the spirit also, the Lord hath absolutely engaged in the Covenant of Grace, to communicate at all times to a believing soul, in regard he hath engaged to perfect the likeness of Jesus Christ in every believing soul, and therefore the spirit doth continually issue down life from the head of the Lord Jesus, into every believing soul which is a Member unto that Head: every Member receives from the Head continually some kind of vertue. Now both these Influences of the spirit being absolutely necessary, though they be free originally, yet the Lord having passed his promise to sinners embracing the promise, he stands obliged to Communicate those Influences of the spirit continually. But now this other Influence is a free Influence in another manner ; It is not absolutely necessary to the Life nor Growth of the soul, in this manner that we are now speaking of, and therefore the Lord is not engaged to Communicate it unto the souls of his People, but he stands at his own Liberty, to Dispence it to whom he will, to send this Exciting spirit into what soul he pleases out of the number of all believing souls: So that it may in an eminent superlative manner, be said of this Exciting work of the spirit to the believing Disposition, what Christ saith of the Breathing of the spirit in general, that the spirit breatheth where it listeth ; It is meerly according to the good pleasure of the Lord, that any believing

believing soul partake of this Exciting work of the spirit to the believing Disposition.

III. You must observe in the Description, That it is a Gracious, Free, and Extraordinary Concurrence of the spirit with the believing Disposition infused. There is an ordinary Exciting Influence of the spirit to the believing Disposition: no Gracious Disposition Infused would shew forth any of its Operation, did not the spirit Concur with the Gracious Disposition, and so consequently there would be no Operation of Faith at all: Now in regard there are constant Operations of Faith in every believing soul, in the course of his Conversion, in one degree or other, therefore it must needs be concluded, there is an ordinary Concurrence of the spirit, into the believing Disposition that is in every believing soul: But this Exciting Influence into the believing soul that I now speak of, is not that ordinary, but it is extraordinary; It is an abundant Breathing of the spirit upon the believing Disposition, mightily drawing it forth into Exercise in its full strength and Power, causing the believing Disposition to be Victorious, and Triumph Gloriously over all Doubts, Objections, and Questions. This is the spirit's Excitation of the believing Disposition infused into the soul.

Now we may conceive that there are three Particular acts of the spirit on the soul, that may be included under the spirit's Excitation of the believing Disposition in the soul, which do all tend unto the Full, Powerful, Mighty Excitation of the believing Disposition in the soul unto exercise.

I. It affects the Heart sweetly with the Pretious Divine Light Discovered unto the soul, by the Manifestation of the Gospel to it. The light of truth

A a

Discovered

Discover ~~ed~~ affects not the Heart any further, than the spirit concurs with the Light Revealed. Now,

1. The spirit causeth the soul to be filled with a Holy Complacency, in beholding the Pretious Divine Light that the Gospel Reveals.

2. The spirit moves an insatiable Thirst in the soul, after the continuance of that Pretious Divine Light shining from the Gospel, into his Poor Obscure Heart.

3. The spirit melts the Heart by the beholding that Light that the spirit puts into it, so as the Heart is made most pretiously Tender, and Pliable, and Flexible to the Blessed Will of God in every thing.

2. The *Spirit* impels, constrains the *Soul* to believing strongly. The Lord rules in the heart of believers by the Royal Scepter of his Word, but not as the Word is barely revealed unto a Soul in the letter of it, but as the Word is brought into the heart by his own Spirit. And therefore when the Spirit sways not the Scepter of the Word in their hearts, the word looseth its Imperial Royal Authority that it hath over the *Soul*, and so the *Soul* lies not under so strong an Obligation to any Duty, as it doth when the *Spirit* brings the Word to the heart.

3. The third Act is the inabling the soul powerfully to believe: According to that in *Phil. 2. 13*: By him we receive both to will and to do, that is, both the disposition, and the Act of the Disposition, both an inward bent of *Spirit* to believe, and power also to act that Disposition, *This is that mighty Power that works in those that believe*, *Eph. 1. 19*. So that the *Soul* that could only Believe waveringly, that it was the Lords will to receive his despicable, loveless *Soul* into union with the Lord Jesus, shall by the powerful ability

bility ~~of the~~ Spirit infused into the Soul by the Spirit, be able to receive it fixedly, to believe it undoubtedly, unquestionably, without the least inconstancy for the present, that the blessed God of Love, will out of his own free love, accept his despicable loveless Soul into the nearest union with the Lord Jesus, and himself through him. That is the exciting work of the Spirit.

There is now the fifth and last work of the Spirit unto souls for that end to be opened, which is the Spirit's Attestation to the Soul, that is to say his Witness Attestation, signifying unto the soul that it shall be certainly, Infallibly, in its cleaving to Lord Jesus, admitted into Union and Communion with him. It is the good pleasure of the Lord, not only to shew the immutability of his Counsel concerning believing souls, and the infallibility of their acceptance into Union and Communion with the Lord Jesus in their souls cleaving to him; but it is also the good pleasure of the Lord to shew more than Sufficiency, the Unchangableness of his Counsel to such souls: According to that Precious place. *Hebr. 6: 17.* The Lord willing more abundantly to shew the Immutability of his Counsel: *Ex Abundanti* as *Beza* Translates the Original; The Lord having a Precious good will to shew, in a way more and beyond what was necessary to believing souls, the Impossibility of their souls failing of Union and Communion with the Lord Jesus in their cleaving to him, he doth therefore now add his Blessed Spirit to be the Comforter of Believing souls, not only in a Degree that is necessary for them, (for which end all those four former Effects of the Spirit upon souls were appointed) but the

Lord appoints the Spirit to be a Comforter beyond what is necessary: And therefore after the Spirit hath given to Believing souls, a clear Evidence of their Acceptance into Union with the Lord Jesus, so as thereby the Spirit had filled their souls with strong Consolation; Yet the Lord appoints the Spirit to add a higher work, which is its Attestation. This Attestation of the Spirit is that you shall find *Eph. 1. 13. In whom also after that ye Believed, ye were Sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise: Or as the Word may be rendered, In whom Believing ye were Sealed*, which Imports the neer Conjunction of these two Blessed works of the Spirit, or the immediate following of the Spirits Attestation, upon the Spirits Excitation of their Souls to Believing. And this work of the Spirit is that you find also in *2 Cor. 1. 21, 22. Now he that Establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath Anointed us, is God, who hath also Sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our Hearts. And this you shall find also. Eph. 4. 30. Grieve not the Spirit of God by which you are Sealed unto the day of Redemption. And so Rom. 8. 16. The Spirit it self beareth Witness with our Spirit that we are the Children of God*. Now least any should question whether the Spirit doth thus work in a Witnessing way, it would be necessary to clear the Interpretation of most of those places from some other Glosses that are Frequently put upon them. It is true say some, the Scripture speaks of the Sealing work of the Spirit unto Souls, but the meaning of the Spirit of Truth is only, that by Graces and Holy Dispositions, that the Spirit Communicates unto Believing Souls, it doth confirm Souls in the certainty of their Acceptance into Union with Christ: So that by the
receiving

receiving of the Spirit by Believers, spoken of in the Scripture of Truth, is only meant Believers receiving the Precious Working of the Spirit in their Hearts, in Holy Habits and Dispositions.

For Answer, I must acknowledge that by the Spirit is frequently meant in Scripture, the Holy Dispositions infused by the Sanctifying Spirit into Believing Souls. And I must acknowledge also, that the Graces or Holy Habits infused by the Spirit in Believing Souls, are spoken of as Witnesses unto Souls of their Union with Christ: And indeed it is questionless that an effect may Witness its own proper cause: And the Scripture speaks expressly, that the works of God are *Witnesses of God*, *Act. 14. 17.* And so Christs works were *Witnesses of his Godhead*, *John 5. 36.* Yet this is not that which is primarily intended in the former Scriptures by the Spirits Sealing the Believing Soul, which may appear to you by two or three Reasons.

I. In regard the Spirits Sealing the Believing Soul, is declared to follow the Souls act of Believing in order of Nature. As in *Eph. 1. 13. In whom after ye Believed ye were Sealed.* Or, *In whom ye Believing were Sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise.* Now all the Precious Holy Habits, that the Sanctifying Spirit Infuses into any Soul, are in order of Nature Infused before there is any Believing act in the Soul: Though the Believing act in a Believing Soul may be Contemporary (that is at one and the same time) yet the Infusing of all the Holy Habits and Dispositions into the Soul, must be conceived to have a precedency in order of Nature, before there can be a Believing act. I confess some (and those learned ones too) have imagined, that the Sanctifying Spirit

rit should work as an external agent, an outward agent upon the Soul in the first act of Believing, and then take up its Habitation in the Soul through the Souls Believing in the Lord Jesus. But reason it self is sufficient Confutation of those Imaginations. Reason will tell us of an Impossibility of a man meerly Unregenerate, to put forth an act meerly Spiritual; Reason will tell us an Habit or Disposition must go before there be an act, a Tree there must be before there can be fruit; And then also the Spirits Sealing of the Believing Soul being declared to follow, at least in order of nature, the Souls Believing, it cannot be that by the Spirits Sealing spoken of in these Scriptures, should be meant the Infusion of the Spirits Graces into the Soul: it must be something besides the Graces Infused.

II. All kind of Holy Habits or Dispositions, that are Infused into any one Believing Soul, are Infused in order of nature before the Souls Believing. Now if the Spirits Sealing were only the Infusion of the Spirits Grace, then every Believing Soul should have the same Seal of the Spirit, whereas experience brings Testimony enough to the contrary.

III. The Spirits Sealing mentioned in those former Scriptures is Attributed in a particular manner to the person of the Spirit, *The Spirit it self beareth Witness with our Spirits*: It doth not say only, the Spirit, which might have been meant the Graces of the Spirit, but the spirit it self, even by a personal act the spirit attests to us that, *we are the Sons of God*. So it is also in Eph. 1. 13, 14. *In whom also after ye Believed, ye were Sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the earnest of our Inheritance*. It is Translated *Which*, but it is most agreeable to the Original, to say,

say, *Who* is the earnest of our Inheritance ; The relative being in the person of the spirit, not the Gifts of the spirit. So that it stands as an Undoubted Truth, that the Lord doth add unto Believing souls for their abundant Consolation, even a Witness from his own Blessed spirit of their admittance into Union and Communion with the Lord Jesus in their cleaving to him, besides all those other Blessed necessary works of the Blessed spirit upon their souls.

Now I must further Observe, that this Attestation of the spirit doth not pertain peculiarly and solely unto Faith, as having reference unto Faith only, and to the begetting of assurance of Faith ; But by Divine Appointment this Witness of the spirit pertains also to sense, to spiritual sense, or spiritual Knowledge, and doth beget assurance of Sense and Feeling, as well as it begets assurance of Faith ; Yet there is such a sweet Mixture in this Blessed work of the Spirits Attestation, that it doth at one and the same time raise the soul to assurance of Faith, and Assurance of Sense and Feeling : And indeed such is the nature of the spirits Attestation, that it never bears Witness to the souls Faith in any measure of clearness, that the soul in its Cleaving to the Lord Jesus shall be admitted into Union and Communion with Christ, but the spirit bears Witness at the same time to the souls sense, that it is actually admitted into Union and Communion with Christ. Yet because we are speaking at present of the manner how the spirit doth first reveal to the souls Faith certainly, and infallibly his Union with Christ, and so assure the souls Faith of Union, we must first speak of the spirits Attestation unto the soul in reference unto Faith. Though we must also for opening the full work of Attestation,

open the manner of the spirits Attesting to the souls Sense and Feeling.

For the opening the first, the spirits Attestation in Reference unto the souls Faith, to

The Spirits Attestation unto Faith.

assure Faith of its Union, I shall open to you two things.

First, Those Respects in which the Lord doth appoint the spirits Attestation to be added to all the former works, as a Redundancy of his Mercy and Love to the Despicable soul.

Secondly, We shall open what the spirits Attestation to the souls Faith is.

For the first, There are four or five Respects, why the Lord adds this work of Attestation to the souls Faith, after he hath perswaded the soul to believe thus powerfully with Confidence.

1. In respect of the Multitude of fears that remain in the Believing Soul, after the clearest Evidence of the Gospel unto the soul, and the most full perswasion of the soul by the spirit to Believe. There are three kinds of fears that still remain in some degree, both in the Seed of them, and in the Fruit of them, though none of them remain in their absolute Dominion.

1. There is both the Seed and Fruit of Slavish Fear. Though through the Mighty Exciting Power of the spirit, following the spirits Irradiation and Manifestation of the Gospel to the soul, it is raised to a fullness of Confidence, of the Lords Acceptance of his soul, into Union and Communion with the Lord Jesus in his Cleaving to him, yet there is not a perfection of Confidence; And it is only perfect Confidence that begets perfect love, and only perfect Love that casts out Slavish Fear.

2. There

2. There is a pure natural fear that still remains. The matter of Believing is of such high concernment, that the very remembrance of it strikes the soul with some natural fear; It is the venturing the precious Immortal soul for Eternity, and unless there were a Perfection of Confidence, a soul cannot be void of fear.

3. There is a Spiritual Holy fear that remains also in the Believing soul, after the strength of Believing. The souls Vision of Union and Communion with Christ, Inflames the Believing Souls Heart with Love unto Union and Communion: And proportionable to the degree of the Souls Love, so is the Souls fear; That is to say, the Soul fears the loss of Union and Communion, in the same degree wherein he loves Union and Communion, and this fear is exceeding prone to go beyond its Bounds, and to suspect the loss of it, where there is no cause of Suspicion.

II. The Lord adds this Attesting work of the Spirit to souls, In regard there is a natural Distrust that in some degree remains in every Believing soul, though raised to a fulness of Confidence. There is not only an Indisposition naturally in the soul, to give Credit to the Blessed Word of the Majesty of Heaven, by reason of its Inability, fully to comprehend the reason of the Lords fulfilling such a Word into his Bosom; But also there is a natural Disposition in dwelling in every soul, that Inclines the Heart strongly to give the Blessed Majesty of Heaven the Lye, to distrust that Blessed Record that the Lord bears of his own Son.

III. There

III. There is a Holy Jealousie that possesseth every Believing Soul, least his Corrupt Deceitful Heart should Delude him. Every Believing soul is so conscious to himself, of a Multiplicity and Variety of Couzening Deluding Tricks, that his Corrupt Heart hath put upon him from time to time, as it dare not trust its Heart when it deals most Plainly and Uprightly. Now from this Holy Jealousie, there ariseth a Difficulty to settle and Establish the Heart, and to free it from all Wavering in its Conscience: Now in respect of this, the Lord adds this work of the spirits Attestation, that the soul may have a full Satisfaction, that there may be no inward Misgivings of Heart, in its Confidence of the Lords acceptance of it into Union and Communion with the Lord Jesus, in its Cleaving and Adhering to him.

IV. There is a natural Unconstancy, that possesseth every such Believing soul in some degree. Ever since the Heart of Man was drawn from that first Blessed Center, it hath naturally been Unconstant in all its Restings: Now from this Unconstancy of the spirit, the Heart is exceeding prone to have its Confidence shaken when the spirit hath raised it to a high Degree; And in respect of that the Lord Vouchsafeth to add the work of Attestation, for the perfect Establishing of the Wavering Soul.

V. There is all the Concurrent Rage of Hell Employed, against every Soul attaining that Confidence of his Acceptance into Union and Communion with the Lord Jesus in his Adhering to him. Now should there not be a Witness from Heaven, or greater Authority in the souls Apprehension, than any Dictates of the Counsel of Hell, the Believing soul would soon call in question the Pretious Word of the Majesty of Heaven

Heaven, and Incline to give Credit to the Dictates of Hells Counsel. Therefore in respect to this, least the Believing soul through this means, should be Robbed of that Precious Joy and Peace in Believing, that the Lord intends, the Lord hath Determined that his Blessed Spirit should become the souls Comforter, by way of Attestation to bear Witness to the certainty of the souls Acceptance into Union and Communion with the Lord Jesus, in the souls Cleaving to him, that so the Witness of Heaven might be of higher Authority to the soul, than all those Cursed Lying Dictates of Hell frequently propounded to that Believing soul.

Now the second thing to be opened is, what this Attestation, or Witness unto the souls Faith is? I conceive *What the Spirits* that this Attestation unto *Attestation unto* Faith, is a Precious Beam of *Faith is.* Heavenly Light, darted into the Understanding, whereby the spirit clearly Demonstrateth to the Believing soul, the Lords Approbation of the souls act of Believing or Confidence, and that with such an unspeakable Divine Authority, as is irresistible by the soul, so that hereby the soul is Established in a Plerophery, or more than a fulness of Confidence.

There are four things in this Description that you must observe.

I. This Attestation unto Faith is a Precious Beam of Heavenly Light, darted into the Understanding. That is the nature of the Witness: This is (as commonly called by Divines, and Christians) a secret Voice, or a sweet Whispering of the spirit: And thence many have sadly Mistaken, and Conceived that

that Witness to be some strange kind of Revelation by a Voice from Heaven; But indeed it is therefore spoken of, as a secret Voice, because it is a secret Beam of Heavenly Light: And thence it is rightly called the Witness of the Spirit of the Lord, Witnessing with our Spirits that we are the Sons of God: Witness, that is, bear Record, give a Testimony; Now to give a Testimony is to declare a thing Verbally: Now indeed in this respect, it is not unfitly called the Voice of the Spirit; for a Voice is nothing else but an Expression of the inward Conception of the mind by words: Now by this secret Beam of Heavenly Light, darted into the understanding, the spirit of the Lord doth secretly express the mind of God.

II. This Attestation or Witness of the spirit unto Faith, is such a Beam of Heavenly Light as doth Clearly, and Infallibly, and Unquestionably, Demonstrate or Manifest to the soul, the Lords Approbation of his act of Believing, or of his act of Confidence. All the Unquiet Tossings and Agitations, and Perplexing Waverings of souls, from what occasion soever, they have their Original in some kind of Doubting, whether it be according to the Blessed Will of God, that their Forlorn, Despicable souls, should be so Confident of their Acceptance into Union with the Lord Jesus, in their adhering to him: Now therefore the Light that the spirit casts into the Understanding, is on purpose to clear, and make it out of all doubt to the soul, that it is Infinitely pleasing to the Blessed God, that even that particular soul should be so Confident of his Acceptance into Union with the Lord Jesus. That is the matter it self that the spirit doth Testify to the soul, or the Testimony it giveth.

III. You

III. You must observe in the Description, That this Attestation of the Spirit is such a Beam of Heavenly Light, that so clears to the Believing Soul, the Lords Approbation of his act of Believing, or his act of Confidence, that it carrieth along with it an Inconceivable Divine Authority. It is such a Beam of Light as hath such an Impression of the Majesty of the Blessed God upon it, that it is impossible for the Heart to make Resistance.

IV. Observe in the Description, that it Establisheth the Soul in a Plerophery, a more than a fulness of Confidence, a Triumphant Confidence. That is the peculiar Inseparable effect of this Testimony that the Spirit gives, it fixeth the Wavering Unconstant Soul. This is the Spirits Attestation unto Faith. Now we shall come to the Spirits Attestation unto Sence; But there is an Objection will be cast in, that must first be opened, whereby the depth of this Unfpeakable Mystery may be something more Unfolded.

Obj. Some Soul may say, If the Spirit giveth no other Testimony to the Soul than this, That his particular Soul shall be Certainly and Infallibly Accepted into Union and Communion with the Lord Jesus, in his Adhering to him, and Produce no other Confidence in the Soul than this, that I, even I, this Unlovely Soul of mine, in Adhering to the Lord Jesus shall Infallibly have Union and Communion with him to all Eternity, then saith the Soul; even after the Witness of the Spirit unto the Soul, it may remain doubtful of its Union with Christ still, seeing by this Testimony of the Spirit unto Faith, the Soul is not assured of his own Cleaving and Adhering unto Christ, and
seeing

seeing the certainty that the Spirit giveth, by the Testimony to the Souls Faith of his Union with Christ, hath its whole Dependance upon the certainty of the Souls Cleaving and Adhering unto Christ.

Ans. 1. For Answer to this Grand Objection,

First, When this Testimony of the Spirit is given unto the Souls Faith, and he is assured that his particular, Unlovely, Forlorn Soul, shall certainly and Infallibly be accepted into union with the Lord Jesus in his resting upon Christ for union, it is not then possible that there should be any Solid Ground for that Believing Soul, to question his own Cleaving and Adhering unto Jesus Christ unto all Eternity. And that will appear in two things.

I. In regard there is a sufficient ground revealed to the Soul, that hath this Testimony of the Spirit unto his Faith, of his Confidence of his Everlasting Cleaving unto Christ, as there is of the Lords Acceptance of his Soul into Union and Communion with him in Adhering to him. The promises of the Covenant of Grace that are tendred in the Lord Jesus, do as perfectly and as clearly, contain and include in them strength to inable Souls to Embrace and Accept those Promises, as they do contain in them a fulness and al sufficiency of Love and Mercy for those Souls that do Embrace them. The Lord that hath said, It is my Will that such Perishing, Sinking, Despicable Souls as will accept my Tender, shall be one with me through the Lord Jesus, and have Everlasting Communion with me, hath also said,

I will

will Allure and draw your Hearts to Embrace and Accept according to my Will, this Union and Communion with me in Christ that I freely tender you. According to *Jer. 31, 32, 33.* *This shall be my Covenant, I will put my Law in their inward parts, and Write it in their Hearts :* That is to say, I will infuse futable Dispositions into the Hearts of all the Embracers of the Lord Jesus, to Incline, Dispose, and Inable them to fulfil all my Revealed Will in some Measure and Degree. So that the Soul hath as sure a Word Revealed to it to depend upon, from whence may arise a Confidence in it, that the Lord will Inable him to Cleave and Adhere Everlastingly to Christ, as it hath a Word whereupon his Soul may Depend, and may be Confident, the Lord will accept him into Union and Communion with him in Cleaving unto Christ.

II. In regard that very Confidence that the Spirit doth produce in the Soul, of its Infallible Acceptance into Union and Communion with him, is the very act of Cleaving and Adhering unto Christ. There are four particular acts of the Soul, Included under this Confidence of the Souls Acceptance into Union with Christ in its Cleaving and Adhering to him.

1. In this is Included the Election of Union with Christ, by the Will of the Soul. Now this is but the receiving of Christ that the Gospel requireth ; To as many as received him to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, *John 1. 12.* Now the consent of the Will to close with Christ in Union and Communion that is tendered to it, is the very Receiving of Jesus Christ.

2. In that very act of Confidence there is Included the Souls Credence, or giving Credit to the Word of God. When the Soul is Confident of the Lords Accepting of it into Union and Communion with him, in the Souls Cleaving and Adhering to him, it is only because of such a Word of Promise from the Mouth of Christ, to which the Soul giveth Credit, or which the Soul Believeth.

3. In this act of Confidence there is a Resignation of the Soul wholly unto Christ. Such as that which is spoken of in 2 Tim. 1. 12. *I know whom I have believed, and I am Perswaded that he is able to keep that which I have Committed unto him*: That is to say, I know whose Word it was that I gave Credit to, and that I was so Confident of the Truth of, That I leaned my Soul upon the Truth of that Word for its Everlasting Happiness. So that then in this act of Confidence, there is Included that Mutual Interchangable Covenanting, that the Word of the Lord requires from Souls in Accepting the Lord Jesus Tendered.

4. In this very act of Confidence there is Included a full Dependance of the Soul upon Christ, hanging the Soul upon the Faithfulness of Jesus Christ and his Word. So that indeed all the acts that the Gospel Requires from Souls are Included in this one act of Confidence that is produced by this Testimony of the Spirit to the Souls Faith: Now the act of the Souls Confidence, being also the act of its Cleaving and Adhering unto the Lord Jesus, and the Souls Cleaving and Adhering unto Christ being Gradually as strong, as the act of its Confidence of Accepting into Union and Communion with Christ, in his Cleaving to him; Thence it appears that there can

be no solid ground of the souls questioning his own Adherence unto the Lord Jesus, when the spirit gives this Testimony forementioned unto the souls Faith, and produceth that Confidence in the soul, of his Acceptance into Union and Communion with the Lord Jesus in Adhering to him. In this very thing lies the whole Mystery of assurance unto Faith; The very Confidence that the spirit begets in the soul, of the Lord Jesus his Accepting it into Union and Communion with him in Cleaving to him, the very act of Confidence is the act of the souls Cleaving to him.

Ans. 2. Secondly I Answer further, that whenever the Spirit by its Testimony to the souls Faith, doth beget that Confidence in the soul, that the Lord will Accept it into Union with himself, in his Adhering to him, then the soul cannot question his own Adhering unto Christ, any more than he questions the Lords Acceptance of his soul into Union and Communion with him in his Adhering to him. The spirits Testimony unto Faith is of such a nature, that it doth equally beget a Confidence in the soul, of his Everlasting Cleaving unto Christ, to the Confidence that it doth beget, of the Lords Acceptance of the soul into Union with himself in the souls Adhering to him. And that will appear in three things.

I. In regard the spirits Attestation unto Faith, is concerning the truth of the whole Gospel of Jesus Christ, or of all the promises. The spirit in the Irradiation of the Gospel, clears that it is the Lords Will to have the whole Glorious work of the Union of Loveless Sinners with the Lord Jesus, to have its sole dependance upon himself; So that it mani-

fefts Believing Strength to inable the soul to Cleave and Adhere to the Lord Jesus, fully to be tendered in the Covenant of Grace, as well as Union with Christ himself is tendered: Now then the spirits Attestation, which follows this Irradiation of the Gospel, is as large as its Irradiation work, I mean, the spirit doth in a Judicial, Authoritative way, Witness the truth of all those Gospel Truths Revealed to the soul: So that the soul cannot possibly resist that Determination, that the spirit gives into its Bosom. Now then there being the same Witnesses of the spirit unto the souls Faith, that the Lord will inable it to Cleave and Adhere to the Lord Jesus, that there is unto its Faith, that the Lord will Accept into Union and Communion with himself in Christ, every soul that will Adhere to him; Thence it cannot be that a soul should more question his Adhering unto Christ, than he should question the Lords Acceptance of him into Union, through his Adhering to him.

II. In regard the spirits Excitation of the Believing Disposition into Exercise, is General and Universal. Now there being strength to Inable the soul to Adhere unto Christ tendered, as well as Union with Jesus Christ is tendered, and the spirits Exciting work being thus General and Universal, it cannot be but the Heart should be Established in the constant Expectation of the one as of the other; To be as Confident of the souls everlasting Cleaving unto Christ, as of his Acceptance into Union with Christ, upon his Cleaving to him.

III. In regard the spirit doth Adjoyn a Testimony unto the soul, that it doth Cleave unto Christ, to its Testimony that it gives to its Faith, that it shall be

be admitted to the Lord Jesus infallibly, in cleaving unto him. The Spirit is so blessed a Comforter, that it sends down living streams of refreshing, both to faith and spiritual sense: when it hath once testified to the souls faith, that unquestionably and infallibly, that particular soul shall be accepted into union with the Lord Jesus, in his embracing of him; it then also testifies to the soul, that it hath embraced Christ, and that the soul is already actually instated in union and communion with him.

Now having opened the spirits *The spirits attestation unto the souls faith: station unto sense.*

The second act of the attestation of the spirit, is it's attestation unto the souls spiritual sense: in this we must open three things to you.

First that there is such a witness of the spirit to the souls sense and feeling, besides the former Record that it gives unto Faith.

Secondly, In what respects this witness of the spirit is added unto the spirits witness unto the souls faith.

Thirdly, what this witness of the spirit to the souls sense and feeling is.

First, that there is such a testimony of the spirit unto sense and feeling, may appear from that one place alone, *Rom. 8. 16. The spirit it self beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the sons of God:* this holds forth, that there must be a witness of the spirit unto the soul, above and besides those holy dispositions, or precious gracious habits that the spirit doth communicate unto souls, and therefore that there is such a witness of the spirit unto faith. Now from hence appears, that there is such a witness of the spirit unto the souls sense and feeling,

1. In that the spirit is said to give a particular testimony unto particular souls, of their actual union with the Lord Jesus. *The spirit witnesseth with our spirits that we are the sons of God*; that we, it is not only a determinating sentence, that the spirit passeth upon the truth of what the Gospel reveals in general, unto every soul that shall embrace him, for that is only thus, that thou or thou, or that particular soul in his accepting the Lord Jesus tendered, shall infallibly be one with Christ; (which is still a testimony unto faith) but the Scripture speaks it plainly, the spirit gives testimony of their souls real accepting of Jesus Christ tendered. The spirit's testimony of faith could be only thus much, to witness from the promise, that this or that particular soul, shall be adopted to be a Child of the Blessed Majesty of Heaven, in his accepting the Lord Jesus tendered: But this testimony is a witness to the particular soul of it's actual adoption already, that we are the sons of God, therefore this must be a testimony of the spirit unto the souls sense and feeling, in regard the proper object of faith, is to receive what is promised, not receive what is done.

2. The spirit is said to be a Co-witness with believers spirits, that they are united unto Christ, and adopted sons and daughters of God through their union with Christ.

Saith the Original, the spirit doth bare witness together with our spirits; so that the spirit is said here to bear witness to the soul, of the same things that the souls own spirit (that is the renewed understanding, or the sanctified Conscience) bares witness to: Now the renewed conscience

science in the believing soul, can only bear witness unto the souls sense and feeling; and therefore the spirit witnesseth the same thing, that the renewed conscience in a believing soul doth witness, it must needs be, that this witness of the spirit must be a witness to the souls sense and feeling.

III. It appears from the peculiar office, to which the spirit of the Lord is destinated. The spirit is appointed to be the comforter, the most superlative eminent comforter: now should not the spirit witness unto the souls sense and feeling spiritually it's union with Christ, it could not comfort in the highest manner. There are three degrees of spiritual comfort.

1. A souls apprehension that union and communion with the Lord Jesus, is tendered to his despicable lost soul. There is a degree of comfort from the possibility, that his poor lost sinking soul may be admitted into union and communion with Christ; but alas this is weak.

2. There is the souls actual embracing this union with the Lord Jesus tendered. There is infinite sweetness and peace in that very believing act of the soul, though as yet there is no sensibleness in the soul of that his own believing, and so no sensibleness of his union with Christ.

3. Which is the Top Stone of the Souls Consolation, and that is the sensibleness of the souls union with the Lord through believing. Now if the spirit should not give such a witness to the believing soul as this, to witness to the souls actual close with Christ, in union and communion, the blessed spirit who is sent from the Lord Jesus, on purpose to be a comfort to believing souls, should

not comfort in the highest manner, he should not be the most eminent comforter.

II. The second thing to be opened, is the reasons of the additions of the spirits testimony unto the souls sense and feeling, to the testimony that it gives to the souls faith. There are five or six reasons of it;

I. To prevent the souls receiving that determination of its corrupt conscience concerning its everlasting estate. In all the various actings of conscience, as a Law, Witness and Judge, it is corrupted by virtue of our first Transgression; so that in whatsoever state the soul remains, when its conscience worketh according to its natural disposition and inclination, it bears false witness, and passeth false judgement: Now therefore doth the Lord vouchsafeto add the spirits testimony of the souls union unto sense and feeling, that the false sentence that conscience passeth upon the soul, might not be received by it. There are three respects wherein the Lord vouchsafeth to add the spirits testimony to sense unto ~~the~~ the testimony it gives to faith,

1. The depravedness and perverseness of conscience in its testimony.

2. The unavoidable nature of the souls hearing that testimony that conscience gives, when the soul is once alive through the life of Jesus Christ.

3. The readiness of the soul, naturally to concur and agree with the testimony of corrupted conscience, while it bares witness against Faith.

The reason is evident, in regard the full bent of the spirit stands to judge of all things according to sense and reason. Now therefore the Lord adds this testimony of the spirit unto sense and feeling

feeling, to give matter for conscience to build a new judgement upon, concerning the souls everlasting estate.

II. The Lord addeth the testimony of the spirit unto sense and feeling, to its testimony unto faith, that the evidence of the souls union unto Christ, might every way counterpoise the evidences that the soul hath received of its separation from Christ.

There are three evidences unto a soul of his separation from Christ, and this testimony of the spirit unto sense and feeling, doth parallel the soul with a sufficient evidence of his union with Christ, answerable to those three evidences of the souls separation from Christ.

1. There is the blessed word of the Majesty of Heaven, determining that every Son and Daughter of *Adam*, is by merit and desert everlastingly separated from the Lord Jesus, and actually the first moment of his Being, void of union and communion with Christ.

2. There is the evidence of the souls work.

The contrary, opposite, rebellious working of the soul against Christ, doth evidently declare that there is no union between Christ and any soul naturally: as the Apostle saith, 1 *John* 3. 8. *He that committeth sin, (that is, with full purpose and bent of spirit, with a full determination of his judgement and will) is of the Devil.*

3. There is the testimony of conscience founded upon these contrary workings of the Heart unto Christ that a soul is separated from Christ. Now in opposition to these three, the spirit gives testimony unto faith, that even such a particular despicable lost sinner, shall infallibly in his cleaving to the Lord Jesus, enjoy

everlasting union and communion with him : And then the Spirit adds this Testimony also unto sense and feeling , whereby he makes the Soul discern even from the moving and working of his Heart towards the Lord Jesus , that he is actually united to him ; and from thence Conscience cannot but bear witness , that the Soul is actually united unto Christ.

III. The Lord doth vouchsafe to make a super-addition of the Spirits Witness to sense, that the whole blessed word of God might sweetly concur together, in bearing Witness to the Souls union with the Lord Jesus. As for example, that word in 1 *John* 4. 13. Hereby we know that God dwells in us, and we in him, (that is, that we have union and communion with God in Christ) because he hath given us of his Spirit. This vvord bears not Testimony to the Souls Faith of its union vvith Christ, but it bears Testimony unto the believing Souls sense that is united, vvhen the Soul is sensible that the Spirit is conveyed from God into its Bosom. Likewise that other vvord in 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Examine your selves, whether you be in the faith, prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you,* (that is to say, that the life, and grace, and holiness of Jesus Christ is communicated to you, that Jesus Christ acts and vvorks in you, and through you) know ye not this, *except ye be Reprobates?* Nowv this Word bears no testimony to the Souls faith of its union vvith Christ, because the indvvelling of Christ in the Believing soul, is not the object of Faith, but the object of spiritual sight.

IV. The Lord adds the testimony of his spi-
rit

rit unto the souls sense, that believing souls might receive the earnest of their everlasting union with the Lord Jesus here below, according to that, *Eph.* 1. 13. Ye were sealed with the Holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession. So in *2 Cor.* 1. 22. Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of his spirit in our hearts. The earnest imports two things.

First, That the Lord giveth the soul part of his everlasting portion before hand.

2dly, That the Lord gives that small portion as a pledge to assure the soul of the enjoyment of the full inheritance. Now in the spirits testifying unto sense, the souls union, the spirit doth clearly manifest the very entrance of the soul into union, and its participation of some degree of union with Christ already, in regard it discovers some of the graces of Christ to be actually inherent in the soul.

V. The Lord superadds the testimony of the spirit unto sense, unto its testimony unto faith that he might effect the fuller degree of conformity to his whole will in the soul. Two commands are impossible for the soul to yield a perfect obedience to, without this Testimony of the spirit to the souls sense, of his union with Christ.

First, The command of examining and proving the soul whether it be in Christ, and all commands of the like nature, that enjoin the soul to examine whether this, or that fruit of the spirit be in the soul? whether love to God, or love to the Brethren be in the soul or no? There can be no effectual obedience to any command of that nature, without the spirits testimony to the souls sense, of his

his union with Christ, in regard it is the proper and peculiar Office of the spirit only, to discover all its pretious workings in the soul, to be in the soul.

Secondly, The command of perpetual rejoycing in the Lord, could not be effectually obeyed without the testimony of the Spirit unto the souls sense. Though indeed believing be the primary original of all spiritual joy, yet the souls sense of its believing, is a necessary adjunct to make up the perfection of that spiritual joy.

VI. The Lord adds the testimony of the spirit to the souls sense of union with Christ, to his testimony to faith, that the believing soul might be filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. All those glorious portions of the Lords word, whereby believers are described by the pretious habits of grace infused into their hearts, would be as so many strong holds for the powers of Hell to fortifie in against the Believers soul, and would be turned by the policy of Hell into condemning sentences against the soul, so as the precious Tower of the souls consolation would be always battered, the sweetest streams of comfort would always meet with one interruption or other, in their flowing down into the bosom of the soul; did not the Lord add the testimony of his spirit unto sense.

What the Spirits witness is unto sense.

The third thing to be opened is, what the spirits attestation to the souls sense, and feeling of his union vwith Christ is. It is a precious, secret, immediate, clear, and authoritative irradiation of the souls believing act, or confidence, causing the truth, sincerity, and uprightness of the heart in believing, to shine so resplendently, that the

the soul in the act of believing is made sweetly conscious to it self, that it doth rightly believe: whence the renewed Conscience determines boldly, that the soul is everlastingly one with Christ.

That I might the more perspicuously unfold this work of the spirit, we shall take the description in peices, and open it in parts.

First, You are to understand in the description, the act of the spirit in this testimony unto sense. The act is an act of irradiation, a cloathing the Believers soul with a transparent glory and brightness. In a word, it is but a precious beam of Heavenly light, that the spirit casts upon the act of believing, for indeed it is nothing else but light to faith, and light to sense, that is the original of all the comfort to believing souls. There are three acts to be observed concerning this irradiating work of the spirit.

I. It is an immediate irradiation; Nay it proceeds from that blessed spirit so immediately, that nothing can concur with the spirit in casting that pretious light upon the souls believing act.

(1.) It is so immediate, as none of the precious Ordinances of the Lord can properly be said to effect, or produce instrumentally, this precious manifestation of the souls believing act to it self. Though it is frequently, yea constantly, through some precious Ordinances, that the spirit doth vouchsafe, thus to irradiate or manifest to the believing soul, the truth of his own believing act, yet it is not by virtue of any of these Ordinances.

(2.) It is such an immediate work of the spirit upon the soul, that demonstrations either from the antecedent or consequent, from the cause, or from

from the effect of believing, hath no place here. Though it is certain, there may be infallible demonstrations drawn by a believing soul, from the effect of his believing, that his heart was true, sincere, and upright in believing, yet the Spirit doth so immediately manifest this believing act, in the truth, sincerity and uprightness of it, to the believing soul, that it doth not send the soul to this or that work, to see what holiness, or strength of love or affection unto Christ, nor what readiness of heart to all obedience to the will of God, were the consequence of his believing, but the blessed spirit doth immediately in the very moment of the souls acting that believing act, cast a beam of Heavenly light upon that very act, that there is evidence enough in the act it self, that the act is a true believing act, according to the evidence of the Lords revealed will.

3. This act of the spirit is such an immediate act, that the spirit useth not the assistance of the discursive power of the mind, to collect from the description of true Believers in the word, that his act of believing is upright and sincere, according to the Lords will. It is certain, that in the spirits irradiation of the souls believing act, it doth discover clearly, infallibly, and unquestionably, all the properties whereby believers are described in the word, to be in the soul also, yet in this that is properly called the witness of the spirit unto sense, in its manifesting the believing act of the soul, it doth not make the discursive power in the mind, the instrument whereby the soul should compare together his own believing act, and the description of the true believing act that the Lord requireth in the word, so as thence to collect by discourse, that the believing act is true.

2dly. It is a clear act, full of perspicuity and transparency. The spirit in this irradiation casts as clear a light upon the souls believing act, to make it discover it self, as the rational soul doth cast a natural light upon its own natural act; so that it is proportionably evident to the soul, that his soul doth believe, as it is evident that the soul liveth, or that the soul wills, or that it hath a being.

3dly. The act of the spirit in irradiating the souls believing act, is authoritative, irresistibly powerful. This beam of light that the Spirit casts upon the believing souls act, hath such a commanding power included in it, that it even commands the believer; yea, it commands undeniably, so as it is not possible for the believing soul to shut its eyes, but it must see.

II. The second thing to be observed is, the object of this act of the spirit in its testimony unto sense. The object named in the description is, the souls believing act or confidence. That is to say, the very act of credit that the soul giveth to the blessed word of God, testifying that it is his will that that particular loveless souls should adhere & cleave to the Lord Jesus to be one with him & to have communion with him; and likewise testifying, that in the souls giving credit to that word of God, it shall everlastingly enjoy union and communion with the Father, and the Son and Spirit. Now there are 4. things observable under this to prevent mistakes.

I. You must observe, that it is only the present believing act, that is the object of the Spirits manifestation, or irradiation. The Spirit doth not cast those beams of Heavenly light upon the souls former and past acts of believing, though they have been multiplied, but only upon the present momentary

momentary act of believing, that the Spirit hath drawn forth from the soul, by its manifesting of the Gospel, and revealing the tender of union and communion with Jesus Christ to the despicable sinner, in its Glory and Brightness.

II. You are to observe, that the believing act of the soul is only the principal and primary Object of the spirits irradiation or manifestation. So that the spirit casts beams of Heavenly Light upon no other act in the believing soul at present, but only upon that act commonly, the spirit doth at the same time so cloath the act of Love, with such a Glorious splendor and brightness, as that's also visible in the same moment to the believing soul, that it seeth unquestionably his Arms of Love grasping the Lord Jesus, as well as he sees the truth of his own confidence in the Word of Christ, that he will admit him into union and communion with him.

III. You must observe the vertue of the spirits irradiating, or manifesting this believing act to the soul. The Vertue of it is to discover the Truth, Sincerity and Uprightness of the heart in believing.

1. The Truth and Sincerity ; To make it unquestionable and Undeniable to the believing soul, that his Wretched, Corrupt heart doth not delude nor deceive him, but that his heart doth rely with some degree of strength, and embrace the Lord Jesus tending union and communion to the soul.

2. It makes apparent the uprightness, that is, the strait Conformity of the heart in some degree, to the rule and command of believing.

IV You

IV. You may observe here, how the spirit is the earnest of the souls everlasting inheritance, or of the souls everlasting union and communion with Christ. It is only as the spirit doth irradiate the souls believing act to it self, that it becomes the earnest of the souls inheritance; That is, that it becomes as a small portion given by the Blessed Majesty of Heaven to the soul in hand, in Testimony that it shall enjoy the full inheritance. The spirit is such an earnest in irradiating the souls believing act three ways.

1. In regard the spirit manifests its own presence in the believing soul, by its irradiating the souls believing act, in discovering to the believing soul, that it doth uprightly according to the Will of God believe. It doth discover Holiness to be infused into the soul, and so consequently discover it self to have taken up its Habitation in the believing soul. So that the believing soul, by the sight that the spirit puts into the believing act, making it Visible to his own eye, discerns the presence of the holy spirit in his heart; and thus indeed there is a pretious earnest given to the soul of his everlasting union and communion with the Lord Jesus.

2. In regard the communion between Jesus Christ and the soul, by the sight of his believing act, appears to the soul to be begun. The soul discerns Jesus Christ and himself to be partakers of one and the same life, by discerning infallibly the truth of his own believing act.

3. In regard it enters the soul into the very fruition of union with Jesus Christ, and so becomes indeed a first Fruit of Heaven, gives it actual possession of that highest blessedness that sanctified souls shall possess in Heaven. The fruition of it consists in two things.

First

First, In the certain knowledge that it hath of union and communion with Christ.

Secondly, In the sense of the sweetness and comfort of union and communion with Christ.

Nothing though it be possessed, can be said to be enjoyed, unless the party possessed of it hath a sense of the sweetness and comfort of the good that he is possessed of.

III. The third thing observable is, the effect of the manifestation, or the enlightning of the believing act in the soul. That is a pretious, sweet consciousness in the believing soul in his very act of believing, that he doth rightly believe, It is by the spirits irradiation of the pretious Gospel of Jesus Christ to the souls understanding, that the soul discerns by faith the bosom of that blessed Redeemer, the Lord Jesus, ready to receive his loveless, perishing, sinking soul, into the nearest union and communion with him: so likewise by the spirits irradiation of the souls believing act, the spirit makes the soul see also as clearly, that it doth, as it were, creep into the open bosom of the love of the Lord Jesus.

IV. The fourth and last thing observable in the description of the spirits witness to the souls sense of its union and communion with the Lord Jesus, is the inseparable adjunct, or concomitant testimony of the spirit unto sense. That's the determination of the renewed Conscience in the believing soul, that he is everlastingly one with Christ. This is properly the effect of the spirits testimony unto sense, whereas the light of every Grace (though they be luminous Bodies, and proceed from the spirit of light) is such a small light in it self, that unless there be an addition by the Spirit unto sense,

sense, it shines not apparently to the believing Soul; and therefore the infallible testimony of the Believers own Spirit, or of his renewed Understanding or Conscience, is but the consummation, or the consequent of the Spirits irradiating the Souls believing act; yet it is inseparable from it; no sooner hath the Spirit witnessed to the Souls sense, that it is one with Christ, but the renewed Conscience answers also, Thou art one with Christ. The witness of the Believers Spirit, or of the renewed Conscience is but the Eccho of the witness of the Lords own Spirit, according to *Rom. 9. 1. My Conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.* It is the Spirit, as it were, that puts words into the mouth of renewed Conscience; it doth but answer what is the voice of the Holy Spirit, as the Eccho answers our voyce. Now when the Spirit hath witnessed unto the Souls Faith, that in its cleaving to the Lord Jesus, his Soul shall be infallibly admitted into Union and Communion with him, and in that witness hath drawn out the believing disposition to act in its strength, and then casts a brightness and splendor upon the believing act, that it shineth thus apparently in the Souls eye, yea so apparently, that the renewed Conscience bears witness that the Soul doth rightly believe; then doth the Soul say with those in *1 John 4. 16.* I know and believe the Love that the Father of the Lord Jesus bears to this my Loveless Soul; then is the poor wavering Soul established and settled as upon an everlasting Rock, the Rock of Ages.

Then, 1. All the beginnings of Hell in his own Spirit are past. All the condemning Sen-

tences of Conscience that he was wont to hear every day, are obliterated and blotted out ; I mean, so long as the testimony of the Spirit thus continues, all the Frowns of Conscience are gone.

2. All tormenting Fears are banished. The inward perplexity, anguish and vexation that perplexed the Soul, through the fear of his everlasting separation from the Glory of the presence of the Majesty of Heaven, all cease ; and there is a blessed Calm possesses the Soul, and then the Soul is brought like a weather-beaten Ship, into the sweetest and most commodious Haven of rest.

3. The Spirit of Glory possesseth the believing Soul. Then is its contentment in union and communion with the Lord Jesus infinite, unspeakable, then doth it rejoyce, yea triumph in the Lord Jesus, *Rom. 5. 3.* Thus through this testimony unto Sense, added to the testimony unto Faith, the Soul is even set down with one foot, as it were, into the great City of the King of Heaven, sweetly expecting his full fruition of that transcendent Glory that it solaceth it self in the sweetest expectation of, till time shall come that Faith and Expectation shall cease, and Sight and Vision shall only take place. Thus you see what the sealing-witness of the Spirit is unto Sense. There are now some Cautions that of necessity must be given to you, believing Souls, to prevent any sad Mistake about this great Mystery.

Caution .1 First therefore you must understand, That though the fulness of the Souls infallible certainty

certainty of his union with the Lord Jesus, doth depend upon this attestation of the Spirit unto his Faith and Sense; yet the Lord doth vouchsafe much comfortable evidence to many believing Souls of their certain and infallible union with the Lord Jesus, to whom he doth not send this blessed Spirit, thus to avouch and attest to their Souls their Union with Christ,

1. The Spirit may and doth; by those four former precious effects upon the believing Souls, establish their Souls in a sweet Soul-cheering, Soul-reviving confidence of the Lords acceptance of them into union with Christ. There is the whole Materiality of the Spirits witness, of the Souls evidence unto Faith and Sense, before the Spirits attestation unto Faith and Sense; though the Spirits witness is the Formality, as I may call it, its that which gives the being of the Souls evidence both to Faith and to Sense, yet you must observe the certainty of the union principally belongs to the Souls Faith,

2. Whatever degree of evidence unto the Souls sense and feeling any such believing Soul doth enjoy, before the witness of the Spirit unto Faith and Sense, the witness unto Sense is exceedingly weak, imperfect and unsatisfying to the believing Soul. Now the Soul conceiveth that he doth feel his heart rightly answering that precious tender of union, immediately again fearing that that wretched cursed heart of his doth but delude and deceive him.

3. You must observe, that this comfortable evidence that the Spirit doth vouchsafe to many

believing Souls, of their union with Christ, it is frequently an addition unto Faith only, and to Faith principally. And indeed this is very common, that the Lord doth vouchsafe thus a comfortable evidence unto Faith, when his blessed pleasure is to withdraw all evidence of union from the Soul's sense and feeling. This was the case of that blessed head of all believing Souls, the Lord Jesus, *Mat. 27. 46.* Saith he, *My God, My God.* Here was a clear evidence that vouchsafed to the Faith of the Lord Jesus his certain and infallible union with the blessed Father; but the evidence unto Sense was totally wanting: *Why hast thou forsaken me?*

4. You must note also, that this comfortable evidence of union with Christ, that the Lord doth vouchsafe to many believing Souls, to whom he doth not send the Spirit to attest their union, is never an evidence to the Sense of those believing Souls, without an evidence unto their Faith. Though the evidence unto Faith hath no such dependance upon the evidence unto Sense, but it may consist without it, yet the evidence of union unto the Souls sense, hath an entire and full dependance upon the Souls evidence unto Faith, that it cannot consist without it. The very matter or original of the Souls evidence unto Sense of his union with Christ, is the believing act, the Souls reliance upon the truth and faithfulness of the Lord Jesus to fulfil his blessed Word, offering reconciliation unto every unlovely Sinner that will. Now without evidence unto Faith of that Souls particular admission into union with the Lord Jesus, that believing act is
never

never drawn forth in the believing Soul.

Caution 2. Secondly, You must understand, That there is much variety in this testimony of the Spirit, both unto Faith and unto Sense. It doth witness in a various manner, to believing Souls their union with Christ.

1. There is much variety in the Spirits testimony unto believing Souls of their union with Christ in the full perspicuity and clearness of the Spirits testimony. The Spirit speaks both to Faith and unto Sense, only by a secret resplendent Beam of heavenly Light, and that Beam of heavenly light hath various degrees of Brightness, wherein it shines in a various manner, unto various believing Souls: To some believing Souls that precious Beam of heavenly light shines with such an orient transcendent brightness, with such transparent heavenly Glory, that no Curtain of Darkness or Distrustfulness, or Unbelief, or sinful Jealousie, can keep out the virtue of that precious Beam; but to some other believing Soul, that precious Beam of Light to Faith, or light to Sense, shines only like a Beam of the Sun through a Key-hole, when the Door remains shut still. There is a threefold degree of its clearness and perspicuity, that may be collected from *Rom. 5. 1, 2, 3.* where a threefold effect of it is mentioned.

1. There is such a testimony as procureth rest and peace to the tossed, perplexed, believing Soul. That's laid down in the first Verse; *Being justified by Faith, we have peace with God.*

2. A second degree, *We rejoyce in hope of the Glory of God.* There is a kind of joy and contentment in the Souls rest.

3. Sometimes the testimony is so clear and perspicuous, as it produces a holy triumph and glorying in the believing Soul ; *vers. 3. Not only so, but we glory in tribulation also.* Yea this full perspicuity and clearness of the Spirits testimony, is that which procures such a general Triumph of the Soul, that it doth not only triumph over all external evils, as being more than a conqueror over persecutions and tribulations ; but the heart in that moment also triumphs over all temptations, even all the evil workings of natural distrust and unbelief in his own Spirit.

2. There is also a variety in the testimony of the Spirit, both unto Faith and Sense, in regard of the permanency and continuance of the Testimony. To one believing Soul the Spirit bears witness of union, by a precious beam of heavenly light shining to Faith's eye, and by sweet holy Rayes cast upon the Souls believing act, but these are but like a flash of Lightning, shut up again in a moment ; but to another believing Soul, the Spirit renders this testimony unto Faith, and unto Sense, in an abiding way.

3. There is a variety in the testimony of the Spirit unto believing Souls, in regard of the frequency of its renewing the same Testimony. To one believing Soul the Spirit will testify again and again ; upon every occasion, the Spirit will step in very opportunely, when the Soul is at a pinch, and renew its Record ; to another believing Soul, to whom the Spirit vouchsafes also the same Testimony, it shall be rarely, and for a moment.

Caution 3. Thirdly, You must understand, That
whenever

whenever the blessed spirit doth avouch and attest most fully to a believing soul its union with Christ, this testimony doth not always actually abide in the believing soul, without interruption and intermission. This heavenly Light, that the spirit of light and wisdom vouchsafeth to a believing soul, may like *Elijah's* fiery Chariot, mount the soul to the third Heavens for a season, yet it must come down again; though *Paul* be wrapped up into the third Heavens, yet he must not abide there while he remains in the flesh: Though *Peter* might have a soul-ravishing view of the glory of the Lord Jesus for a season in the Mount, yet he must not have a Tabernacle there.

There are four or five reasons, why it is the blessed pleasure of the Majesty of Heaven, that the testimony should not actually abide in the believing soul.

I. That there might be a difference between Heaven and Earth.

II. That the Lord might have his honour in believing souls, in his predestinated way. The prime and principle way wherein the Lord hath determined from Eternity, to have honour from his Saints, while they are here below, is from their believing his Majesty upon his bare word, 2. *Cor.* 5. 7.

III. That there might be a constant, lively, experimental sense of the souls absolute dependance upon the Lord still, for the evidence of his union.

III. That the Lord might instruct all others the better, by his dealings with some believing souls.

God instructs weak believers in this, that the evidence of union is not essential unto union.

V. That the glory of the precious Saints may be Vailed and hid, and this may be in judgement to the world, that they may stumble at the Saints, and judge them dispicable fools, that spend their time in sadness and melancholy.

Can. 4. Fourthly, there is a fourth caution, and that is this, that the efficacy of this blessed Record, that the spirit gives to a believing soul, of his union with Christ, ought to continue when the Record it self doth not actually continue. The Record of the blessed spirit is the judicial sentence the spirit casts upon the souls final estate, and therefore ought to be totally definitive, never to be called in question by that believing soul, but the soul for ever after, even in the saddest interruption of that blessed spirit ought to say, though I do fall; I shall arise, though I have no vision of the sweetest face of my Redeemer, yet I shall see him face to face, when I shall be altogether like unto him. It is infinite sinfulness, for that believing soul, ever to call in question the love of the blessed Majesty of Heaven, after the spirit hath thus avouched it to the soul.

Thus you have heard in some measure the grand question opened, which is, how a soul may certainly and infallibly know, that he is united to the Lord Jesus. I shall now come to answer to the second question, which is this;

Que. 2. How Souls that conceive themselves to have received certain and satisfying evidence of their union with the Lord Jesus, may know certainly and infallibly, that their evidence of this union with Christ received is ^{really} ~~only~~ from God, and not a diabolical Enthusiasm, or Inspiration, or a delusion by

by the Devils translation of himself into ~~an~~ Angelical glory?

Now for the clearer explication or unfolding this question, there must be divers things premised.

There be four things I must premise concerning those diabolical inspirations.

And there are Four things concerning the manner of the Souls trial of his evidence received, whether it be a delusion, or whether it be from the Lord in Christ.

Pre. 1. First, I must premise, that all the dimensions of the implacable malice of the infernal powers, is directly set a work against every believers evidence of his union with the Lord Jesus. The darkning the pretious evidence of the Souls union is in a manner the Center wherein all the Hellish designs that are practised against a believing soul meet together in one.

All the fiery darts that he shoots from his Hellish Quiver against Believing souls are intended to batter down the Tower of strong confidence of the Lords acceptance of his Soul into union with the Lord Jesus. His most cursed insinuations into any believing heart, alluring to any corruption intentionally tends towards the darkning the light of the Lords countenance that shines upon the believing soul; certainly the Devils acting with so high a hand against the Apostle *Peter*, that caused him to deny his blessed Lord and Master, the Lord Jesus, intentionally ended in this, to overthrow his confidence in Christ, and therefore Christ tells him, he had prayed for him that his faith fail not. Nay, the blessed head of all believing souls, the Lord Jesus himself (who was a perfect example and pattern to
all

all believing Souls in temptation) he was encountred withal in this way by the grand Adversary the Devil, the Devil made his close and strongest battery against his confidence of the hypostatical union between the Father and him; therefore saith he, *if thou be the Son of God, command these Stones to be made Bread.* And in like manner, all the powers of Hell are in a particular manner employed against every Believers evidence of his union with Christ, and therefore he especially endeavours to strike down their faith. Whence it was that the ^{zealous} Apostle was chiefly over the Devil in that particular, *1 Thef. 3. 5.* Saith he, *I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the Tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.* Indeed there are many reasons why the peculiar malice of Hell should work in all its strength against believers evidence of their Union with Christ.

I. In regard the faith that is necessarily drawn forth into exercise with strength and power, upon receiving evidence of the souls union with Christ, is a peculiar object of the Devils malice. And that in Three respects.

1. That faith which is drawn forth into exercise, is the most direct opposite of the Devil, it is the Devils grand Adversary. In that lieth all the strength of the believing soul, against all the Devils encounters: It is the Shield that quenches all the Devils fiery darts, *Eph. 5. 6.* It is that whereby the soul resists the Devil till he gains the conquest, and puts that infernal Adversary to flight, *1 Pet. 5. 9.*

2. In regard it is the most triumphant Conqueror over all his Army, that he calls in for his assistance against the believing Soul. *This is the victory whereby we overcome the World,* 1 John. 5. 4. That is, all that either within or without the Soul shall concur to the drawing it from obedience to the Lords will.

3. That faith that is necessarily drawn out into exercise, upon the receiving the evidence of the union, is that which gives the Lord his most peculiar glory and honour of his precious truth : By this the believing Soul sets to his Seal that God is true, John. 3. 33. Now the Devils peculiar malice being against the blessed Majesty of Heaven, thence his malice is against this faith, that is drawn out into exercise upon the Souls receiving evidence of union with the Lord Jesus.

II. In regard the joy and comfort that is the inseparable consequence of the Souls receiving the evidence of his union, is another peculiar object of the Devils malice. Envy works infinitely in the Devils bosom, upon the sight of such unspeakable joy as poor believing Souls are filled with ; seeing Angels whose nature are more glorious, are left absolutely destitute of joy and comfort. Now from these workings of envy, hatred works also infinitely and unspeakably in the Devils bosom, against the evidence of the Souls union with Christ.

III. The believers evidence of his union with the Lord Jesus, being the peculiar work of the blessed Spirit, of necessity must be the peculiar object of the Devils malice, there being such a diametrical opposition between the Devil, and that blessed Spirit. Every work of that blessed Spirit is infinitely abominated

abominated by him: And thence this evidence of the Souls union is the particular object of the Devils malice, in regard it is the Office of the blessed Spirit to be the comforter of those believing Souls.

IV. In regard the believing Soul, through that evidence of his union with the Lord Jesus, hath some kind of fruition and enjoyment of Union and Communion with the Father through Christ. The Soul doth not only possess Union and Communion, but hath the knowledge of it, the sweet and comfort of it, and thats the fruition of Union and Communion. Now the Union of Souls with the Father through Christ, is the most proper object of all the Devils envie and malice.

5. The very first-born power of his malice works against the Believers evidence of his Union, in regard Believers through their enjoyment of that evidence of their Union with Christ, do hold forth the most orient brightness of the Lords grace & love in Christ. Now the Lords peculiar delight being in receiving the honour of his love from poor despicable worms; thence the Devils malice works infinitely against the Souls receiving evidence of his union with the Lord Jesus, because it works infinitely against the Lords receiving his own intended glory.

Pre. 2. Secondly, I must premise, That all the most profound policy, subtilty, and craft of all the Princes and Rulers of the Region of darkness, is employed in that most cursed insinuation to a believing Soul, that the evidence of his Union with Christ, received either to faith or sense, is but a diabolical delusion. The policies of Hell all concur together

her in its strength in this temptation or insinuation to a believing soul that his evidence is but a delusion.

I. In regard by the Devils prevailing in this temptation, he leads the Soul in the most ^mextricable labyrinth, that there is no possibility by all the diligence the soul can use to evade or escape, and find the way out. The Soul once passing a Sentence against his own evidence, that it is nothing but a fancy, or a hellish delusion, he is lost in a wood as it were of fear and perplexity, of questions and scruples, he is then caught indeed in the Devils thicker, in the bryars that are of Hells own planting. There is nothing then left to clear the Souls way (I mean if the actual evidence of that Souls Union be suspended) until a renewed actual evidence of the same Spirit comes to the Soul: There is no way left for the Soul wherein it is possible for it to make a tryal of his own estate; The Soul can make no proof from the light of his own Grace, that light must be supposed to have been discovered to the Soul in its union received, that being rejected, no other light can manifest Grace to be in the Soul.

II. In regard the prevailing in this temptation grieves the very Comforter himself, it wearies the Spirit of the Lord, whose Office is thus; To reveal to the ~~Soul~~^{Soul} its acceptance into union with Christ, it causeth the Soul to make a direct opposition against the blessed Comforter. So that now in the Devils prevailing in this insinuation, he not only leaves the Soul in a most inextricable labyrinth, but provokes the blessed Spirit of the Lord to withdraw himself, and to withhold all renewed beams of light from that believing Soul.

3. In regard the prevailing of that temptation would bereave the Soul (at least of the fruition and benefit) of all that's past over to the Soul in Christ. If that temptation take hold upon the Spirit, that the Soul draws that conclusion, that his evidence is a delusion, then all the boldness and freedom of access to the Throne of Grace for supply, is vanished in a moment: In a word, by the prevailing of this, the Devil in a manner snatches the believing Soul from among the number of the Friends of the Almighty, and sets him among the poor strangers; by the prevailing of this, he snatches the believing Soul from among the Vessels of honour (I mean in the Souls apprehension, and in regard of the Souls enjoyment) and places it among the Vessels of dishonour, it makes ~~the~~ the Soul disclaim all interest, right and title to any mercy and love.

4. In regard the prevailing of this insinuation with the believing Soul, doth reduce or bring back the believing Soul, and make it liable and subject to the power and force of all other cursed insinuations from the Devil. The prevailing of this suggestion brings the Soul under the force of all those temptations that his Soul was formerly delivered from, all the temptations grounded upon the Souls unworthiness, all that were grounded upon the Souls long continuance in sin.

Pre. 3. Thirdly, Every believing Soul that hath received the evidence of his union to faith and sense, must expect all the rage, power, and strength that Satan can afford, to be employed against the Soul, to darken and obscure that evidence.

1. All the power of Hell is employed to suggest
false

false reasonings, carnal sensual arguments into the mind of that believing soul.

2. All the power in the corrupted Conscience of that believing Soul, is and will be employed to accomplish that design, to perswade the believing Soul that the evidence of his union received, is but a diabolical delusion. His power in the corrupted Conscience will be employed to ^{excite} ~~edifie~~ and stir it up to bring in false Accusations against the believing Soul.

3. His whole power and strength will be employed in stirring up passions, and disordered tumultuous affections in that believing Soul. Any believing of fear and terror, the Devil will foment and nourish, and by his mighty power over those passions and affections, make such a confusion and tumult, as if the Soul and Hell were to come together immediately.

The Devil will employ his power over the affections themselves, and his power upon the humours of the Body, through which those passions and affections work. The Devil upon the very suggestion, that the Soulevidence of his union is a delusion; will ~~exorcise~~ exercise his power so upon the humours of the Body, as to dispose the Body to a timorous trembling, it may be almost every joynt shaking, upon the imagination it may be deluded, and then nourish and augment, by bringing in renewed accusation upon accusation, against a believing Soul. So that all the false reasonings of the mind, and the false accusation of the conscience, hath a more power upon the Soul in regard of the disposition of the body, and the working of the affections.

Fourthly

Pre. 4. Fourthly, I must premise, That all the utmost power and possibility of corruption that remains in a true Believer, are ready to comply with, and second the Devil in the exercise of his malice, policie and power against the believing soul, to receive that cursed suggestion of Hell, that his evidence of his union received; is but a delusion. Wretched Man in his first transgression joyned a cursed amity with the Devil himself, and ever since Mans Heart hath set at the Devils Council Table joyning all the strength of its policie and power with that infernal Spirit, to maintain his tyranny over the poor Soul, that whatever Hell-bred design the Devil acts against the believing Soul, the Heart doth immediately comply with that hellish design; And though indeed Mans corrupt heart be ready to comply with every motion and insinuation and suggestion that proceeds from Hell, yet there is a more peculiar disposition in a believing Soul, to comply with that cursed suggestion of Hell, that the evidence of his union received is but a delusion, and that upon these Four grounds.

I. In regard there is a peculiar endeavour of sense in every believing Soul to regain his first dominion, to have the prime commanding authority in the believing Heart. Hence you shall observe, that the most pretious Saints have maintained a mighty battel to the power of their Souls *against* sense, striving to prevail over faith; and yet the strongest Saints have been inclined and readily disposed to judge of all by sense, that is to judge according to what they see and feel of the dispensations of God to them, and workings of God in them. So you see the holy Man *Gideon*, *Jdg. 6. 12.* The Angel of the Lord (which

(which indeed was Jesus Christ himself) appeared to him, and said the Lord is with thee thou mighty man of valour : but mark, now sense strives for the dominion over faith; faith *Gidion*, *Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us; and where be all his Miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.* Thus sense saith in another case, if the Lord will accept me to be one in Christ, why is my heart left thus and thus, why are my corruptions thus strong? so again you shall observe, *Psal. 73. 2.* The godly man *Ashaph* confessed that sense did so strive for the mastery, that his soul by that had well nigh lost its standing in faith; my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped; nay sense wrought so far that you shall observe, *v. 13.* the holy man had concluded, that he had cleansed his heart in vain, and washed his hands in innocency. There is a peculiar disposition in every believing soul, to comply with the suggestion of Hell; that his evidence of his union with Christ received, is but a delusion: There is a concurrence in this to all the arguments of sense.

1. There is a concurrence with sense, in the cause that sense argues against the soul. Senses arguments tend all to prove an impossibility to, forlorn souls should be united to the Lord Jesus: Now this is the very matter of the suggestion, that the soul is not united: so that there is such a degree of futility, that the soul is glad of such a suggestion, as the proof of what sense maintains against the soul.

2. There is a concurrence in the medium, that sense useth to disprove the souls union with Christ.

The grounds of that suggestion from Hell , that the believing souls evidence of his union is but a delusion is fetched always from some defect, or some miscarriage in the believing soul , either from some want of holiness , or some unsutable working in the spirit, to what the soul conceives is the temper of the spirits of those who receive such evidence of their union : Now Senses arguments are the same ; It is always the voice of sense in the believing soul , my heart is thus and thus vile ; I am dead , vain and formal , blockish , carnal , sensual , sleighty and loose , I am little better than a block under Ordinances ; therefore it cannot be that I should be united to the Lord Jesus.

3. By senses complying with this suggestion to the believing soul , that his evidence of union is but a delusion : sense doth immediately aspire to the Throne again in the believing Heart , and doth immediately endeavour the dispossessing of faith. If the heart comply with that suggestion, that the evidence of his faith is but a delusion ; then seeing the souls evidence of union was primarily and principally unto faith ; faith is made wholly subject to the souls sense , so that sense then bares the prime and principle rule in the soul.

II. There is a peculiar disposition in a believing soul to comply with the suggestion of Hell, that the evidence of his union with Christ is but a delusion, in regard of that desperate enmity of carnal reason against faith in every believing soul. The Apostle saith, *Rom. 8. 7 The carnal mind (which is the seat of reason) is enmity against God*, so against all the holy workings of God in a soul, and therefore in a peculiar manner it is enmity against that special working of the

the spirit of God in the soul, which is the believing disposition. There is an irreconcilable opposition between carnal reason and faith in every soul: carnal reason cannot comprehend that gracious unspeakable mystery of the union with the Lord Jesus through believing only; and because it cannot comprehend it, therefore it is opposite to the utmost of his power. Carnal Reason is always for self-advancement; and therefore directly opposite to the souls believing; which is the lowest debasement of the soul; and thence carnal reason is opposite to the first act of faith, and to every consequent act of faith also; so that there could not be a believing act in any soul, did not the spirit of the Lord come with a mighty power to throw down those strong carnal reasonings; according to that, in 2Cor. 10.45. throwing down the strong holds - Imaginations - Original it is as *Beza* renders it, the very reasonings of the flesh are thrown down, whereby the flesh had fortified it self against the spirit, drawing the soul to believe. So opposite is carnal reason to faith, that it invents a multitude of false reasons, and rotten grounds, to perswade the unregenerate soul to a good opinion of his own estate, that did not the spirit of God throw down those reasons, it were impossible the soul should believe. Likewise again after the first act of believing carnal reason turns the mouth of his great ordnance, whereby it mannages the Battle against faith another way: Then carnal reason mannages it against the right of the soul to believe, and perswades the soul it hath not believed, and it may not, it ought not to believe there is no ground for such a dispicable soul as he to believe. Now in regard of this enmity

of carnal reason in the heart against faith, there is a ready disposition in the soul to comply with the suggestion, that his evidence of union with Christ is but a delusion.

1. the evidence is sutable to carnal reason. Carnal Reason leaps now in the soul in its suggestion, and says thus, you should not believe; and yet you would presume though you were unholy, and altogether unsutable to the promise; and now you see you have undone your own souls, and cast your selves into the inextricable Laborinth.

2. In regard there is a powerful inclination in every soul, to comply with carnal reason. Carnal Reason is our own, and because our own, we are willing to put our selves under its power.

3. In regard there is an oppiniativeness in the soul of the excellency and strength of the arguings of his own carnal reason. This you may observe in *Asaph*, *Psal.* 73 16. he confessed the conceitedness of his own carnal reason, when he saith, *I thought to know this*; but he confesseth when he went into the Sanctuary, to consult with the word of God, and let faith be judge, then he found himself as ignorant as a very Beast.

III. There is a peculiar disposition in the believing Soul to comply with the evidence of Hell, that his union is but a delusion; in regard there is such corrupt affections remaining in every believing Soul in some degree, that makes the suggestion of the Devil, that his evidence of his union with Christ is but a delusion, to be in a manner plausible and pleasant to the believing Souls. Jealousies and suspicions of God, and his faithfulness in ^{receiving} ~~receiving~~ such a dispicable forlorn Soul into union

nion with Christ do in some degree possess every believing Soul; now in regard that suggestion from Hell, that the Souls evidence of union with Christ is but a delusion, and all the reasonings of the flesh that concur with that suggestion also, do nourish and increase the Souls suspicion, and afford matter to the Soul of Jealousie: thence through the strength of the Souls Jealousie and Suspicion, even that very suggestion that under one respect is like a dreadful poisoned Arrow, that sticks in the Heart to wound the Bowels, yet in another respect it is in a manner plausible and pleasant.

IV. There is a peculiar disposition in the believing Soul, to comply with this suggestion that his evidence is but a delusion, in regard the remaining corruption in the believing Soul doth evade the mighty power of faith, in crucifying, mortifying and suppressing them, by complying with this suggestion. Faith's power against corruption, consists especially in two things.

1. In holy boldness, claiming power from the Majesty of Heaven against corruption, in his holy bold engaging his blessed God in Christ, to come in for his assistance. Now this power of faith against corruption is abundantly weakened by the heart complying with that suggestion from Hell, that the evidence of his union is but a delusion.

2. It consists in faiths holy oratory, in arguing within the soul against corruption. Indeed there is Faith's mighty power in bringing in such impregnable arguments, as all the Sophistry of Hell it self cannot devise an evasion from them.

These things I have premised concerning delusions, only in reference to believing Souls.

First, that believing Souls might not account it

strange to meet with that suggestion, that the evidence of their union with Christ is but a delusion.

Secondly that Believing Souls might not subscribe suddenly to that suggestion, that the evidence of their union with Christ is but a delusion, without due, holy examination of the ground and reason that backs and fortifies that suggestion in the soul.

But now in reference to unbelieving Souls, there is much more to be added still by way of premise concerning these delusions.

Pre. 5. Fifthly, I must also premise, that the most profound Policie, the depth of subtilty and suggestion of all the Spirits whose habitation is in the Region of Darknes is employed to the utmost to delude multitudes of Souls, with false hopes, counterfite joys, self-deceiving, and soul-destroying confidence of their union with the Lord Jesus, and reconciliation with the Father. Thus the Policy of Hell was employed to delude those poor foolish Virgins. *Mat. 25. 11, 12.* by arguing from their profession of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; (signified there by their Lamps) that they were joyned to Jesus Christ; and should be everlastingly saved by him; whereas poor foolish Souls, they saw at last to their everlasting horror and amazement, that they were meerly couzened by the Devils Sophistry. Thus certainly the Wits of Hell were employed to deceive those self-flattering Jews, *John, 8. 18.* to make them conceive their natural Birth from *Abraham*, was ground sufficient; whereupon they should conceive the blessed God of Heaven to be their God: whereas the dearest compassionate Redeemer of lost Souls, was constrained to tell them, they were of the Family of Hell, and

and the Devil was their Father. Thus was that proud Pharisee, *Luke*. 18. 11. by the subtle Sophistry of the old Serpent deluded also; he was even triumphing, as if he were sure of Heaven, he was thanking God before hand for it.

But indeed, as it is the Master-piece of the Devils Policy to perswade true Believing Souls, that the evidence of their Union with Christ is but a delusion: So on the contrary, the result of all those cursed counsels of Hell concerning Unbelieving souls, (living under Gospel Preaching) is to perswade them that they are certainly joyned to Christ, and shall be everlastingly saved by him. And indeed there are Various grounds of this different practice of the Policy of Hell against believing and unbelieving souls. The Perswasion that the soul hath, to conceive that his evidence is but a delusion, is most suitable for the Devils purpose to work upon a believing soul.

I. In regard every believing soul is for ever out of conceit with himself. Such a view hath every such soul received of his loathsome filthiness, and Forlornness, that in some degree he doth for ever abhor himself, he is utterly out of love with himself, and all that he is and hath; Now thence it is, the perswasion that the evidence of his Union is but a delusion is suitable to fasten and take Impression upon such a soul.

II. Every believing soul hath experimentally found, the dreadful self-Flattery that his spirit is exceeding prone to: His heart hath flattered him into a good opinion of his own estate, from various rotten grounds: Believing soul hath experimentally found, that one time he imagined his estate to be

safe, and sure and secure, meerly upon the ground of his own Change and Reformation from what he was; Another time he thought his estate to be secure, meerly from the performance of the duties the Lord required publick and private. Now from these many experiences of the sandy foundations, that his heart had caused him to build the hope of his security and safety for eternity upon every believing soul is apt to be Jealous, and ready to entertain any scruple about his own estate, he is very fearful least he should build upon another sandy Foundation.

III. Every believing soul hath been sensible, of infinite invaluable worth of Union and Communion with the Lord Jesus. In matters of great concernment, the spirits of Men are naturally suspicious of Disappointment; So that from the sence of the infinite value of Union with Christ, naturally flows Suspitions and Jealousies of being deceived in the greatest matter of Union, And thence the Suggestion that the souls evidence of Union with Christ is but a Delusion is sutable and feeds that suspicion.

IV. Every believing soul is sensible of the infinite danger of the loss of Union, by fostering false Hopes, and groundless Conceits of Union, by Flattering himself in a good Opinion of his Union with Christ, without sufficient ground from the Lords Blessed Word. Now the soul apprehending the danger of Miscarrying is filled with Fear, yea prone to fear where no cause of fear is: Every thing makes a man already in fear to be more afraid; Fear clouds the Understanding with Darkness, and maketh every thing seem black and dreadful; So that thence believing souls are sutable Objects for the Devil to work upon by that Perswasion, that the Evidence of their Union is a Delusion.

V. Every

V. Every believing soul doth prie and search into the Rottenness and Unsoundness and Hypocrisy of his own Heart, and discerns some degree both of Unsoundness, and Rottenness and Hypocrisy. And thence it is that the Devil Imloys his Power against the believing soul, in regard he hath a foundation, whereupon to build his cursed suggestions, that the soul is deluded.

Now on the contrary, the depth of the Devils policie is employed to perswade unbelieving souls of their certain reconciliation with God in Christ upon these grounds.

1. Because self-flattery hath a high Throne erected in every unbelievers heart. There is a cursed Principle of self-love that naturally possesses every heart, and from thence proceeds this wretched principle of self-flattery, a powerful inclination to speak pleasing things to our own souls. Now from the power of self flattery in unbelievers hearts.

1. There proceeds an inward aversion or turning their hearts away from all fears and doubts of their own acceptation of God in Christ. It is a Thorn in their sides, and a Thistle in their Eyes, that the Spirit of God should but cast in a doubt, whether they be joynted to the Lord in Christ, or be still in the state of nature.

2. From the power of self-flattery proceeds also an indisposition in every unbelievers heart, to examine the ground whereupon he builds his confidence and hope of his union with Christ.

3. From the power of this self-flattering proceeds also a readines in the heart, to give credit to all vain hopes, and cursed suggestions from Hell to his unbelieving soul. Now in regard of the strength of self-flattery in unbelieving souls, as it is backed

ed with these three attendants, the depth and policie of Hell is employed to perswade unbelieving Souls that they are unquestionably accepted of God in Christ, and shall everlastingly be saved by him.

II. The depth of the policie of Hell is concerning unbelieving souls, to delude them with false hopes of their union with Christ, in regard there is a dreadful spiritual blindness, fallen upon every unbelieving soul, whereby the Prince of darkness hath his advantage to lead the blind soul to those cursed paths of darkness.

First, There is a privative blindness fallen upon unbelieving souls.

Secondly, A positive blindness.

First, There is a privative blindness that is various.

*Privative
blindness.*

I. There is an inability in the unbelieving Soul, to discern the nature of the celestial mystery of a Souls union with the Lord Jesus. All the things of God are but dark to a Soul, who is under the power of the Prince of darkness, 2 Cor. 4. 4. *The God of the World hath blinded the minds of them that believe not.* And 1 Cor. 2. 14. *The natural Man cannot discern the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned.* But there is a more peculiar blindness upon an unbelieving soul, in the mystery of the Souls union with Christ, than in most of the things of God besides, because the mystery of union with Christ hath supernaturalness in it, and is more contrary to carnal reason; Thence it is no great difficulty to perswade the soul, that a false groundless qualification is the true believing act that the spirit of God requires; that this blind confidence is that strength of assurance that the Lord commands the soul to receive through faith.

II. There

II. There is such a privative blindness in an unbelieving soul, that there is an inability, an insufficiency to discern in any degree, the infinite transcendent excellency of their souls union with Christ. The most Eagle-eyed carnalists that ever proceeded from the loyns of *Adam*, the most accurate disputant, the most deep sighted politician, never saw the least glimpse of the transcendent excellency of a divine union with the Lord Jesus: likewise the multitude of unbelievers, they conceive of union with Christ in a carnal way, apprehending that it should save them from torment, and that it should bring them to some kind of joy, they know not what nor how; Now thence the depth of Satans policie is active in perswading their souls that they are certainly one of Christs.

III. There is such a privative blindness in unbelieving souls, as disenables them to conceive of the infinite danger of the loss of union. The multitude of unbelieving souls, apprehend nothing but some restless torment that will seize upon them in case they fail of union with God in Christ: Now from their ignorance of the danger of the loss of union, thence it is that their thoughts are little taken up about their union.

IV. Such a privative blindness is fallen upon unbelieving souls, that there is an inability in their souls to discern the matter and ground of suspicion, that the Lord should not receive their souls into union with Christ. The souls enmity against God, and the nature of the enmity is the ground whereupon suspicions are built, that the Lord will not accept their souls into union with the Lord Jesus; Now unbelieving souls discern not that enmity wherewith their hearts are filled,
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gainst the blessed majesty of Heaven, Thence the policie of Hell is employed to perswade them, that they are certainly joyned unto the Lord Jesus.

V. There is such a privative blindness fallen upon unbelieving souls, as that there is an utter inability in them to discern the ground and occasion of suspicion, that their hopes of union with the Lord Jesus are delusions. Commonly the experience of that wretched guile and deceitfulness, of the corrupt treacherous false heart is the original of those suspicions, that their union is but a delusion; This unbelievers cannot discern, and thence it is that the depth of the policie of Hell work against unbelieving souls, in perswading them of their certain union with the Lord Jesus, whenas they are utterly strangers to him.

Positive blindness.

Secondly, There is a positive blindness also: That is, a multitude of false Principles, and notions of darkness, doctrine of Devils possess the minds of every unbelieving soul, commonly unbelievers minds are possessed with wretched Principles, that surely God will damn none of those whom himself created; Or with that Principle, that if Men do what they can, surely God will accept them, the Lord will take the will for the deed; Or else that Principle that such strictness, severity and austerity of life, such a height of holiness constantly in all their ways, is not required of God, men may be saved without such strictness of holiness. Now from this positive darkness there is some suitableness in the spirits of unbelieving souls to receive that suggestion, that they are certainly joyned to the Lord Jesus, and reconciled to the Father when they are still at enmity. That's the second, a dreadful blindness that is fallen upon unbelieving souls. III.

3dly. The policie of Hell works in unbelieving Souls, to perswade them of their certain union with the Lord Jesus, in regard every seeming counterfeit shadow of holiness, appears glorious in an unbelieving eye. Every vain empty shadow of holiness, or holy duties, appear very glorious to a Soul under the power of the Prince of darkness, whose eye the Prince of darkness hath blinded through unbelief. There are two principal reasons why the policie of Hell works against unbelieving Souls, to perswade them that they are certainly united to the Lord Jesus.

I. By the prevailing of this suggestion, unbelieving Souls are bound with *Adamantine Chains* in the Devils Slavery.

1. In regard the power of all the blessed invitations, and the most sweet Soul-melting exhortations unto union, and amity and agreement with God in Christ are prevented. The unbelieving Soul then looks upon himself as no object of any of those pretious invitations, because he thinks he is already united to the Lord Jesus.

2. In regard the restraining power of all the Lords menaces and threatnings to the actings of enmity is prevented. So that the Soul says within it self upon every threatning from the Lords word, that it is not to him, he hopes Jesus Christ hath made peace for him; God and his Soul he hopes are reconciled in Christ.

3. In regard there is enmity against the brightness, and lustre and beauty of holiness, excited and stirred up in that unbelieving Soul against the conversations of all those Souls that profess union with the Lord Jesus; who walk in a higher pitch of holiness, than his Soul walks, in that it eclipses and
con.

condemns his life, and vertyually Judgeth him still to be a Stranger to the Lord Jesus, and void of union with him.

4. By the prevailing of this suggestion with unbelieving Souls, they are even devoted unto blindness. Their Hearts endeavour to expound the truth in a suitable way to themselves; yea, their Hearts work with a kind of infinite enmity against every truth that they cannot prevent, that contradicts their false hopes, and soul deluding joys.

II. The depth of the Devils policie against unbelieving souls, is to perswade them of their certain union with Christ, in regard the false hopes, the Soul deluding confidence of such unbelieving Souls, is a most mighty means to strengthen the hands of wickedness. It is the most powerful Orator to perswade other unbelieving Souls, to proceed from one degree of wickedness to another, without restraint of their wicked Hearts, from their full swing in their cursed way.

Pre. 6. Sixthly, There is a Sixth Premise; and that is this; That the Prince of the power of darkness doth exercise a mighty power upon Souls to effect that politick design of his, in casting them into a fools Paradise of imaginary spiritual safety; in deluding them with vain hopes of union with the Lord Jesus, when they are Strangers and Enemies to him. This power that the Devil exerciseth upon Souls for that end is Threesfold.

First, There is a power that he exerciseth upon the mind or understanding.

Secondly, A power he exerciseth upon the Conscience.

Thirdly, A power he exerciseth upon the Passions or Affections.

First,

First, The Devil exerciseth a mighty power upon the minds and understandings of Souls, to delude them concerning their union with the Lord Jesus. The understanding is to the Soul, as the Compass to the Ship, if the Compose be marred, the Ship may be easily guided into a devouring Gulf, instead of a safe Harbour. If the understanding be once deluded, the Soul may easily steer his course towards the Gulf of everlasting woe, instead of that blessed Haven of everlasting happiness. Thence it is that the Devil exerciseth a mighty power upon the understandings and minds of Souls to corrupt and delude those. Now this power that he exercises upon the understanding is also various.

Satans power upon the mind.

There are Eight degrees, or various acts of the Devils power exercised upon the minds and understandings of Souls, to delude them about their union with the Lord Jesus.

1. The first act of the Devils power upon the understanding is his forgery, invention, and suggestion of false reasons, rotten arguments, and fallacious means, from his high endeavour to persuade Souls of their certain infallible reconciliation or union with God in Christ, when they are separated by a brasen Wall of enmity from him. There are Six or Seaven false reasons, and rotten arguments, that he doth ordinarily suggest unto believing Souls, from whence he insinuates to them falsely their certain union with the Lord Jesus.

1. He suggests to the understandings of some Souls, their vast difference and disagreement from other Souls, and thence secretly insinuates to them, that

that certainly they are of the number of those that are joynd to the Lord Jesus. This the Devil suggested into the mind of the deluded Pharisee, *Luke* 18. 12, 13.

2. The Devils suggests unto some other Souls, their enjoyment of special peculiar priviledges, different from the priviledges that the multitude of the World enjoy, and thence also insinuates into them their certain infallible reconciliation to God, and acceptance with him in Christ. This the Devil suggested to those self-deceived Jews, *John* 8. 37, 38. Say they, *we are Abrahams children*, and thence certainly think they, we must be Gods Children also.

3. The Devil suggests to some other Souls, their moral duties and acts of righteousness, and from thence insinuates to them, that they are certainly accepted with God in Christ. This fallacious argument was that whereby the Devil perswaded the young Man (mentioned *Mat.* 19. 20.) that his Estate was an Estate of spiritual safety. Thus also were those poor blind Jews deluded by Satans hellish sophistry, *Rom.* 10. 3. They rejected the righteousness that is by Christ that was freely tendred to them, upon this ground, that their own righteousness, their outward observation of the Law was sufficient for their justification before God, and acceptance with him.

4. The Devil suggests to some other Souls, their constant diligent use of the Lords Ordinances, appointed for them to worship the Lord in. By this kind of false argument, did the old Sophister deceive those poor deluded Souls, *Luke* 13. 26. Saith they *we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou*

thou hast taught in our Streets ; That is, they had the nearest communion with him in his Ordinances, they were diligent hearers of the word, and waited upon him whereever he brought a message to them.

5. The Devil suggests to other Souls, their forward profession of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and thence insinuates into them, that surely in their perseverance in that profession, they shall be admitted into union and communion with Jesus Christ, the Lord is at peace with them, their state is good enough. This was the very fallacy whereby the Devil deceived those poor foolish Virgins, *Mat.* 25. 8, 9, 10. They had Lamps like unto the Lamps of the wise Virgins, they had a profession agreeable and suitable unto the profession of sincere Christians, and thence they never imagined but their estate was sure enough, till they felt by dreadful experience, that the Lord abhorred such a heartless, formal, external profession as theirs was.

6. The Devil suggests to other Souls, their change and alteration from what they were formerly, and thence insinuates into them their spiritual safety, their reconciliation with God in Christ. This the Devil did suggest in some degree to *Herod*, *Mark* 6. 20. That his hearing *John Baptist* gladly, and his reforming many things, was a certain ground of the goodness of his own estate.

7. The Devil may and doth suggest to some other Souls, the death of the Lord Jesus, though generally, brokenly, and confusedly ; and from thence he deceivingly insinuates into many souls, their certain and infallible union with Christ, when the high Wall of enmity stands between Christ and them.

There is much difference between the blessed Spirit's insinuation of the death of Christ brought to remembrance, that a Soul shall be admitted to the Lord Jesus, and this insinuation that ~~thus~~^{thus} proceeds from the Prince of darkness.

1. The Devils suggestion of the death of Christ unto Souls, whom he intends to delude with false hopes of union with Christ; it is only in a general notion and apprehension of it. It is a constant maxim, *Dolus latet in universalibus*, that deceit lies under universals and generals: Therefore the great Master of deceit chiefly endeavours to keep his poor deluded souls, in general notions of all the truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Though the Devil suggests the death of Christ unto some understandings and minds, whom he intends to delude, yet he avoids the suggestion of it in any particular manner. He brings to the soul's remembrance, that Jesus Christ died for sinners, but he hides as much as possible the quality of sinners for whom Jesus Christ died, I mean the quality that is intended by the Lord from eternity to be effected in those sinners to whom the death of Jesus Christ is; and shall be applied. Commonly the notion is so universal, they rather think Jesus Christ died for all sinners; whereas the spirit in suggesting the death of Christ to any soul, suggests it particularly, to be for every unlovely sinner, who shall receive and accept of the virtue and efficacy of his death, as it is rendered to them; so that by its suggesting the death of Christ, it begets a holy confidence in the soul, of the truth and faithfulness of Jesus Christ according to the tender of his death, to make up union and communion between
God

God and his Soul, and so indeed that very act gives the soul evidence to his faith of his admission into union.

2. The Devil presents the death of Christ brokenly, at peccemeals. It may be he minds the Soul that Christ died for sinners, but he brings not one of the precious heart-breaking invitations of Jesus Christ, inviting his forlorn, despicable soul, to partake of union and communion with the Father by the vertue of his death. Whereas the blessed spirit brings the death of Jesus Christ to remembrance, in a most sweet, pretious, orderly and distinct way; It presents not only the death it self, but it presents the person to whom it is offered, the sweet heart-breaking invitations to that particular soul to accept that tender.

3. The Devil suggests the death of Christ darkly, with as much obscurity as it is possible. The Devil studies obscurity in the presenting the death of Christ to his deluded souls, that he might hide and veil that precious heart ravishing love, that would shine forth by a clear view of the death of Christ to any loveless sinner. Yea, he suggests the death of Jesus Christ to the sinful soul so darkly, that the very end of the death of Christ shall not come to the souls remembrance, they shall never have a thought, that the death of Jesus Christ was on purpose to bring their cursed rebellious hearts and God into a state of amity and love again: Should the least spark of this Heavenly light break forth, in his suggesting the death of Christ, their own Consciences would soon pass the sentence of condemnation upon themselves, and positively

sively declare them to be farr from any right or possession, or interest in the death of Christ.

4. The Devil suggests the death of Christ confusedly, in a distracted disorderly manner, so as the soule whom he intends to delude, shall have no kind of distinct orderly knowledge of the death of Christ. He suggests immediately the death of Jesus Christ for them, and perswades them with all his power, that Jesus Christ died for them in the first place, without any reference to any ground whereupon the Soule should build that perswasion: Thence it is that the multitude of your poor deluded soules will tell you immediately they believe, but they know not what they believe, they know no other notion of faith, than to believe that Jesus Christ died for them.

II. The second act of power that the Devil exerciseth upon the minds and understandings of soules, to delude them with vain hopes is a discerning power into the minds and understandings of soules. It is one of the principal and grand employments of all the spirits in the region of darkness to study mens tempers and dispositions; and mens notions and apprehensions, that he may observe what false reasonings, what rotten Argument is fuitable to delude that soul with, and what rotten argument is fuitable to delude another soul with.

Object. But here is an objection to be answered before we proceed: But you will say, can the Devil look into the understandings of men, the workings of the minds of men, to know what the inward actings of their minds are?

Ans. I answer negatively, that the inward acts of the mind and understanding, cannot certainly and

and infallibly be discerned by all the wisdom and pollicie of all the spirits in the region of darkness, especially the inward thoughts and workings of the mind and understanding cannot in and by themselves immediately be discerned by all the wisdom of Hell, notwithstanding their strictest scrutiny. It is the incommunicable property of the blessed Majesty of Heaven to be the searcher of the heart, and the knower of the thoughts; Thence in *Heb. 4. 12, 13.* It is attributed to the word of God only, as its peculiar property, to divide between the joynts and marrow, and search into the secrets of the heart. So in *1 Cor 4, 5.* Christ is said in the day of Judgment to bring to light all the secrets of the heart. But though the Devil cannot discern immediately, certainly, and infallibly, the working of the mind and understanding, or the secret Thoughts as they are in themselves and by themselves, yet the Devil can by other means, have neer guess at the most inward working of the mind and understanding; he can find out the very secret workings of the understanding in a very probable way.

1. The Devil can discern much of the thoughts and ~~inward~~^{secret} workings of the minds and understandings of men, by their outward actions. Actions are but the birth of thoughts, as all actions are the births of habits, they are the original of all outward actions that are deliberate and rational. And thence the Devil can discern very narrowly into the thoughts by the outward actions, he can guess both by the gesture of persons, and by the very motions of the body, what the inward thoughts of the mind are, especially when he discerns such and such to be the constant way and manner of the conversa-

tion of a person, then he understands well what the Principle must needs be that leads such a person to order his conversation in that manner.

2. The Devil can immediately discern what the Images and Species of things are in the fancies of Men. Images of things in the fancy of Man, are but like a shadow to the Body; whatever the workings and inward motions of the mind and understanding are, the images of the same things are in the fancy: As the shadow accompanies the Body, so do these fancies accompany the understanding; Now the Devil being ~~able~~^{able} immediately to understand these, from thence he can collect and gather what the notions of the understandings are.

3. The Devil can discern all the motions of the affections and passions. The passions always working in the blood, by the motion of the animal spirits to the heart, and from the heart, thence the Devil can immediately behold the first rise of any passion and affection; passions of fear, or passions of love, or joy, and grief, and hatred and displeasure: Now these passions and affections always attending the will of the soul, and the will of the soul always attending and following the understanding, or the practical Judgment; thence also the Devil can collect by the practice and affections, what the inward notions or thoughts and workings of the mind and understanding are.

4. The Devil can observe diligently what the issue and event of his own suggestions are upon the fancies of Men. He observes whatever false reasons that he himself propounds do produce in the person, and from thence also he hath a near discerning, from the effect that he discerns, what the workings of the understanding and mind are.

5. He

5. He hath a large and long time of experience of all the several and various acts, that various principles, and various thoughts have produced. For though he be not able to discern the thoughts while they are locked up in the mind and understanding, yet afterward, when they are either revealed by a passion, or when they are brought apparently into action, he then understands them: Now he for five thousand years and above, treasuring up all observations, he hath observed when one hath confessed these and these were his thoughts, what the effect of those thoughts were; when another hath confessed these and these were his thoughts, he hath observed what the effect of those thoughts were: Now by his long and constant experience, he can ^{compare} declare the actions of one Man, with the actions of another Man, what such and such thoughts have produced; and thence can probably conclude, what the workings of the thoughts, and mind and understanding of any person is: Now in all these ways he exercises his utmost skill, his most exquisite art, to discern into the understandings and minds of persons, whom he intends to delude by any false reasonings, concerning the certainty of their union with Christ, so that the false reasonings that he shall suggest to them may be suitable, that they may take at the very first suggesting of them. There are three things in the understanding, that he endeavours to understand by all his skill and art.

1. He endeavours to discern the depth or shallowness of the mind and understanding of the person, whom he intends to delude by some false Argument or other, from whence he would fallaciously persuade the soul of his union with Christ. Now

according to what he discerns in the understandings of persons, so he suites his reasons and arguments: may be he discerns a shallowness in some understandings, thence he suites his reasonings proportionable to their understandings; many poor shallow souls he can perswade, that their good meaning is enough to carry them to Heaven: Another shallow soul he can perswade his good Prayers, his deeds of Charity, his paying every Man his own, and dealing justly is enough. Likewise when he discerns a greater depth of understanding in any person, he lays out more of his curious skill and art, he covers over his false reasons more speciously, he lays his fallacy more indiscernably and deeply; There is no low Argument that will satisfie a deep understanding (though a natural one) that he shall be saved; yea, no lower fallacy will be sufficient to delude such an understanding, but a false apprehension and notion about the nature of faith, some mystical fallacy about the mystery of believing in Jesus Christ.

2. The Devil searches into the notions and principles that are most settled and fixed in the understandings of persons. There are various notions that every understanding is filled with, which according to the imaginations of the several persons are truth: some understandings are filled only with gross and carnal, and sensual notions, they conceive of God only in a carnal and sensual manner, and of the mystery of the Gospel carnally; Others understandings are filled with notions that have a kind of spirituality in them. Now the Devil makes an exact search, to find out these, that thereupon he may propound lying arguments, of the union of
Souls

Souls with Christ suitable to those notions; So that when he perceives an understanding only to be filled with carnal notions of God, he can propound his carnal outside appearances of worshipping of God, as a ground to that soul of his peace, and union and reconciliation with God, he need seek for no higher depth to delude such a Soul; But when he perceives an understanding to be filled with higher notions of God, and of the mystery of the Gospel, he then propounds not only bare material outward acts of divine worship, as the lying ground to delude such a soul concerning his union with Jesus Christ, but he propounds inward actings of transcendent slighty affections; yea, may be to such understandings, he propounds the death of Christ, a speculative faith, and an historical faith in the death of Jesus Christ, and from this historical and speculative faith, he insinuates into them their peace and reconciliation with God, and certain salvation by the Lord Jesus.

3. The Devil makes a scrutiny into the mind and understanding, to discern its occasional notions and apprehensions upon the providence of God, that the person meet with. He pries into the understanding to discern what Judgment it passeth upon the Lords conferring temporal blessings upon it, And he pries into the understanding to discern what Judgment it passes upon the Lords withdrawing temporal blessings, and inflicting sore evils, ~~and~~ according to ordinary and common conceptions of the understanding, upon such providences of God, he may also propound his lying arguments of the souls union with Christ. Thence it is you shall observe, that the Devil takes much advantage to confirm some poor ignorant ones, in their Soul-deluding

ding confidence of their Peace, and Union and Reconciliation with God, from the constant influence of all Temporal Blessings in their Bosoms: And thence it is, that other souls he confirms in their soul killing hopes of their Union with Christ and Peace with God; from the multitude of Crosses and Tribulations they meet withal here below; Thence are those Speeches that you shall hear from many Ignorant ones, I hope the Lord looks upon me as his Child because he thus Chastises me; I hope, saith another, that I have my Punishment for my Sins here below.

III. The third Act of Power that the Devil exerciseth upon the Mind and Understanding is this, He doth Secretly, Inwardly, and Indiscernably Communicate these his lying Arguments, his Rotten, False reasons, from whence he falsely insinuates into souls their Union with Christ. As the Prince of Darkness was a Created Angel, he hath a kind of neer, though mediate access to the Minds and Understandings of Men, so that he can secretly Propound all his lying Reasons, yea he can suggest them so indiscernably, that the person to whom they are suggested shall not Understand in the least that they are from the Devil, but shall rather conclude they are the right Reasonings of his own faculty of reason that God hath Communicated, or they are the Workings of the Lords Blessed spirit. Thus the Devil was a lying spirit to *Ahab* in the Mouths of the Prophets 2 *Chron.* 18. 23. The way of this neer access of the Devil to the Understanding, to Communicate his lying Argument to them of their Union with Christ undiscernably is by these two means.

1. By means of the Subtility of his nature by which he is able to Pierce insensibly, and indiscernably into the

the very Bodies of Men, they neither Seeing, Perceiving, nor Feeling that Penetration of *Satan* into their Bodies; So that by this he enters insensibly into the very brains of Men, which is the very Organ of the common Senses.

2. He doth both discern, and stir up and Collect together, the Species and Images of things that are in the inward Senses, that is to say the Fancy, and by moving and stirring all those Phantasms, (those Images of things that are in the Fancy) he doth secretly Convey all his own lying Reasons into the Mind and Understanding, so as the persons to whom those lying Reasons concerning their Union with Christ are suggested, perceive them not to be from *Satan*, but either imagine they are true Reasonings from the Word of God, or from the Spirit of God cast in their Minds.

IV. The Fourth act of Power that the Devil exercises upon the Mind is this, That he doth through his Neer and Familiar access through the Fancy to the Mind and Understanding, Suggest and Propound Frequently and Importunately, his Rotten Arguments, and Fallacious grounds of Souls Union with Christ. He doth renew again and again the same lying Arguments unto Souls, of their Union with Christ, so as they shall scarce pass out of their Thoughts and Mind; And this indeed hath no small Power upon the Understanding, to settle the Mind and Understanding in a Conceit of the truth of those his lying Arguments. The very Frequency of Thoughts and Imaginations, have the secret force of an Argument, to perswade the Mind that the thing is so. You shall observe it, when any matter runs in our Mind Frequently, Familiarly, and almost Constantly,

stantly, we will then easily believe there is something in it. The frequent suggesting of those reasonings is a kind of Importuning the mind to consent to them and embrace them. As that unjust Judge, *Luke. 18. 5.* condescended to the Widow, because of her importunity; (though the justice of her cause that he propounded bore no sway in his unjust mind) so though the reason it self at first suggested should bear little sway; yet the importunity of the Devil in suggesting the reason prevails much with the mind to consent to it and close with it.

5. A fifth act of the Devils power upon the mind and understanding is this, that he doth through his accute and clear knowledge of the Images of things together in the fancy, and through his power to collect and gather them together in the fancy, suggest a multitude for his lying argnments, his false rotten reasonings for the souls union with Christ, at one and the same time. He doth so multiply his deluding grounds of the Souls union; that the number of the arguments for the union hath a power upon the understanding, when the arguments themselves have little power. The Devil deals with Souls, as he did with Jesus Christ in his tempting of him; he presented all the glory of the world in the twinkling of an eye, that so it might have had some perswasion in the mind of Christ: thus the Devil doth at once set almost all his rotten reasons that are sutable to that understanding whom at present he is to delude: thus you shall observe the Pharisee, in that 18. *Luke.* whom the Devil deluded concerning his acceptance with God; he had at once in his thoughts the great difference that was between him and others, that he was not as other men were; and also his exactness and

and strictness according to the Lords Law, paying Tithes of all things, his extraordinary frequency in solemn duties, his fasting twice a week; and it is probable, all that ever the Devil could say concerning the Souls acceptation with God, was propounded at once to him; so that what one rotten lying reason want to perswade the soul of his union with Christ, another may supply.

6. The sixth act of the Devils power upon the understanding for this purpose is, that he holds and retains the mind and understanding, with its full intention and strength, upon those lying arguments and rotten reasons of the souls union with Christ that he suggests to him. This the Prince of Darknes effects two ways.

I. By diverting or turning away the mind from all those thoughts that should contradict those lying reasons for its union. Now in this Satan doth exercise a three-fold power.

First he doth excite and secretly draw into exercise, the natural loathness, unwillingness and indisposedness of the mind to any ^{pure} holy thoughts suggested by the blessed sanctified Spirit.

Secondly, Satan doth excite the vanity, instability and wantonness of the mind.

Thirdly, The Prince of Darknes stirs up the inward enmity in the mind against all such thoughts.

II. He doth hold and retain the mind upon its lying reasons for its union; by a constant application of these his lying reasons to the mind. So that by these two means he doth hold the intention of the mind upon his rotten reasons, for the souls union with the Lord Jesus, that he prevents the souls looking upon any thing that should discover its deluded estate.

7. The

7. The seventh act of power upon the understanding, is this, Satan doth suggest his lying reasons for the Souls union with the Lord Jesus, with a superlative insinuating power to take the deluded heart with it. Satan doth not only propound the argument and so exercise a meer moral power upon the mind, but through his power upon the fancy, he doth immediately so insinuate into the soul, that the Soul is prevailed withall to accept of the suggestion he propounds. Thence you shall observe in 2. *Thess.* 2. 10. that those that received not the truth with the love of it, were given over to strong delusions; not only delusions, but such delusions as had a prevailing strength in them, to prevail with the mind to believe them.

8. There is an eight act of power upon the mind and understanding, that Satan exerciseth for this cursed purpose. Satan doth suggest his false reasons and lying arguments for Souls union with Christ, with an imperious power, a kind of commanding authority, adding an ~~abstentious~~ ^{obstreperous} settled and fixed affirmation that it is so, making up what is wanting in the strength of the argument, with the boldness and confidence of his affirmation that it is so. By this means he bears down the spirits of his deluded ones, so as they cannot make resistance, you shall observe it, a weak spirit is overpoured by a stronger spirit, though it be not overpoured by any strength of reason, but by the strength of the spirit, by the violence and confidence manifested in the reasons and arguments.

This is the first power of Satan to delude souls, a power upon their understandings.

Secondly

*Satans Power
upon the
Conscience*

Secondly, the second power Satan exerciseth, is upon the Conscience in Reference to the establishing of a poor deluded Soul, in a strong self-deluding confidence of his union with the Lord Jesus; that caution must be always taken, that Satan hath not any immediate power to work any impression upon the conscience, that's one of the incommunicable royal properties of the Majesty of Heaven; therefore all the power he exercises upon the conscience is but in the corruption and pollution of conscience, his principal power consists in inflaming those cursed sparks that are already kindled in the Soul; and indeed he doth make a superaddition of such a vehemence and violence in every such pollution, as far as the Lord doth suffer him to exercise his power. Now there are five of these corruptions in the Conscience, that Satan exerciseth his power upon to delude the poor soul.

1. The injudiciousness of conscience, it's weakness in judging, or its blindness. Now this injudiciousness of conscience, is also two-fold either the injudiciousness of the conscience in respect of the rule of judgement, by which it judgeth its union with the Lord Jesus. Or else secondly, the injudiciousness of conscience in the application of the rule

First the injudiciousness of the conscience about the rule of judgement by which it judgeth of its union with Christ now.

1. from this injudiciousness about the rule, proceeds those dreadful misunderstandings of the Scripture by deluded souls. Hence such strange, blind Interpretations of Scripture are given by them, as that in *Rom. 10. 13. who ever call upon the name of the Lord*

Lord shall be saved; they from hence have concluded, that it was sufficient for Salvation to some kind of Prayers to the Almighty upon some occasions, yea hence some have desperately concluded, that the crying Lord have mercy upon them at the last, was sufficient for Salvation. Yea hence also it is, that those deluded ones so dreadfully understood the command of believing, conceiving it only to be meant of a speculative faith, only a kind of notion, that Christ did come down and take flesh upon him, and did in the nature of man die the death of the Cross, in satisfaction to the Fathers justice for sinners, and thence it is so common among them, to profess themselves to be Believers.

2. From this injudiciousness in the conscience about the rule of judgement, proceeds those false apprehensions about the nature of union with Christ, or the Souls acceptance of union tendered. Conceiving that hearing the word of God, and forbearing to make any opposition against it, is the very acceptance of the Gospel, the very embracing that union with Jesus Christ that is tendered to them.

Secondly, The injudiciousness of the conscience, consists in its injudiciousness in the application of the rule. Sometimes such clear Beams of the Light are darted into a Soul, that the conscience cannot pass a false judgement upon the rule it self, yet then through the natural corruption of the conscience, through its injudiciousness ~~of~~, its prone to apply the rule falsely; and this insudicious doth Satan exercise all his power upon.

II. The second Corruption in the Conscience is the Laziness, or Remissness, or Idle Negligence of the Conscience, in its restraining Office, whereby it should compel the Soul to fulfil the Will of God that is Revealed to him. The Conscience is by Divine Appointment a Talk-Master set over the Soul, to press the Commands of God upon it and enforce Obedience: And through the pollution that overspreads the Conscience, it hath been Enclined strongly to a remissness in this its Office, to which the Lord hath appointed it; Now the Devil Exerciseth all his Power upon this Idleness of Conscience, making it to be more strongly disposed to Carelessness and Remissness. And from this Remissness of Conscience in this its Office.

1. All the Contradictions in the actings of a Deluded Soul, to the proper natural effect of receiving true Evidence of a Souls Union with Christ are undiscerned in that Deluded Soul. Proportionable to the Negligence of Conscience, in constraining the Soul to do the Will of God Revealed, is the Negligence of Conscience in receiving an accompt from the Soul, of the Obedience that it hath yielded to the Will of God Revealed.

2. From hence also proceeds a quietness in the Mind of the Deluded Soul, under all those Sins that are inconsistent with Union with the Lord Jesus. Were not the Conscience Remiss and Negligent in that his Office, in constraining Souls to Obedience to God, there could be no Quiet or Content in the Mind, while the Soul walks contrary to the Revealed Will of God, especially when his ways are inconsistent with injoying Union with God in Christ.

3. From hence the Equity and Rectitude of *Satans* Application of his Lying Arguments for the Union of their Souls, is also Maintained Unblemished. The reason that remains even in Unbelieving Souls, will not be satisfied without some appearing Equity and Rectitude, in *Satans* Lying Arguments for yielding to it : Now a Multitude of Sins contrary to the natural effects of the receiving evidence of Union with the Lord Jesus, would Blemish the Equity and seeming right Rectitude of *Satans* application of such a Lying Argument of the Souls Union with Christ, yea it would discover the false application of such a Lying Argument of his Union.

III. The third Defilement or Corruption of Conscience, is its Insensibleness, or Regardlesness, of Sins Committed when discerned. This the Devil Maintains, Foments, and Increases with all his Power, in reference to the Deluding the Soul with a foolish dream of Union with Christ.

1. In regard hereby *Satan* presents the Frequency and Strictness of the Souls enquiring into the nature of his own hopes of Union with Jesus Christ.

2. Hereby the positive lightness, in the matter of hopes for Union with Christ, is Begotten in the Soul. Now this lightness of Spirit, in the matter of their hoping for Union with the Lord Jesus, doth dispose their poor Foolish Souls, readily to receive any suggestion from Hell that they are United, without any fear of danger whatever.

3. Hereby the Jealousie of *Satans* suggestion to the Soul that he is United, is wholly prevented.

IV. The fourth Corruption or Defilement of Conscience, is the Unfaithfulness of its Recording or Registring the Souls Iniquities. Now *Satan* exerciseth this Power upon the Defilement of the Conscience also.

1. In regard hereby he doth prevent the Souls whom he Deludeth, from discerning or beholding the Contradicting reasons, to their reasons from whence they hope that they are United to the Lord Jesus. Every Sin is a reason of mighty weight, to perswade the Soul that he could never be United, and every Aggravation of those Sins, but above all, the rejecting of Union with Jesus Christ Tendered: Now *Satan* well understanding, that his Foolish Suggestions unto Souls, that they are United to the Lord Jesus, and his Reasonless Reasons to perswade them that they are United, would never be admitted of, did the Souls to whom he Suggests that they are United, discern the Multitude of Reasons that might perswade them, it is Impossible that ever they should be United; thence it is he doth exercise his utmost Power upon the Unfaithfulness of Conscience in Registring the Souls Iniquities, that so it may not bring one of those Iniquities to the Souls Remembrance of a Thousand.

2. By this Unfaithfulness of Conscience in Registring the Souls Iniquities, the Infiniteness and Unspeakableness of the danger of the loss of Union, is Undiscerned also by those Souls. The greater Apprehension of Guilt, the greater Apprehension of danger, in case the Guilt should not be removed from their Souls: Now by *Satans* Fostering up Conscience in its Unfaithfulness, in Registring

up the Souls Iniquities, it Apprehends but a small, flighty, superficial view of his own Guilt, and therefore hath but flighty Thoughts about the loss of Union, in case he be Deprived of it.

V. The fifth Corruption in the Conscience, is the Unjustness in passing Sentence upon the Souls Estate. Conscience is so Corrupted that it will be passing Unjust Sentences, Accusing when it should be Excusing, and Excusing when it should be Accusing: Now this Unjustness in the Conscience in passing Sentence upon the Soul, *Satan* exerciseth all his Power upon, to Augment and Increase it to the utmost, that by this means Conscience may be ready to Comply with any Suggestion of his, that the Soul is United; and according to his bare Suggestion to pass the Sentence upon the Souls Final Estate, that it shall be Everlastingly Saved by the Lord Jesus.

Sect. 3. Thirdly, The third Power that *Satan* exerciseth upon the Affections, or Passions. There is a Two-fold Power that he exerciseth upon the Affections or Passions: There is a Moral Power, and a Physical Power.

I. There is a Moral Power he exerciseth upon the Affections; that is by propounding Objects suitable to stir and move those Affections. Thus in propounding to the Soul its certain Acceptance with God in Christ, and Everlasting Salvation by him, he propounds an Object suitable to move false Joy and Delight and Contentment, and so by that means heightens the Self-deluding Joying and Rejoycing in those Deluded Souls.

II. There

II. There is a Physical Power he Exerciseth upon the Affections; and that is an Immediate Power, that he exerciseth upon the humours of the Body, through which those sensible motions of the Will work. It is the property of Affections, to cause the blood and the Animal Spirits to move to and fro from the Heart, and thereby to make the Body suffer: Now *Satan* can immediately stir those humours in the Body, which the Affections do in their workings also stir, and thence raise an Affection beyond its bounds. Now *Satan* exerciseth these two Powers of his upon the Affections.

1. In regard hereby the Confidence in Deluded Souls of their Union with the Lord Jesus, is occasioned to work with a Mighty Violence, with a kind of Irresistableness.

2. Hence that Confidence of his Deluded ones, that they are United to the Lord Jesus, is made Irrational. Through the Violent working of such Affections their Judgment is blinded, their Reason darkned and obscured; and when the matter passeth to the affections, a Judgment perisheth: thence you shall have many Deluded Souls, that will hold with much Confidence and Boldness the Conclusion, that they shall be saved by Jesus Chyist, when they are driven out of all their Reasons, whereupon they Build this hope that they are United.

There are now secondly, some Considerations about the Tryal of a Souls Evidence of his Union received, whither it be from God, or whether it be a Diabolical Inspiration, that are requisite to be Premised before a direct Answer to the Question.

Pre. 1. First, that every Believing Soul to whom the Lord hath vouchsafed a clear Evidence of his Union with the Lord Jesus, is powerfully incited by the Subtility of Hell, to a Dubious, Anxious, Solicitous Tryal and Examination of the Evidence of his Union with the Lord Jesus Received. The Subtility of Hell works this way in three Respects.

I. In regard the Believing Souls Evidence of his Union with the Lord Jesus Received is Enervated, made of no force by a Souls Consent to a Dubious and Anxious Examination of his own Evidence of Union Received. By this means the eye of the Believing Soul is off from his Evidence Received, and now he Conceives that his Work and Employment that God calls for at present from his Soul, is to find out some other clear satisfying Evidence, of the truth of that his former Evidence, and whatever light shines from the former Evidence is of no Validity to the Soul, unless it be backed with some other light that shines from some other Principle, either in the Soul or without the Soul: So that there is a Bottomless Depth of the Subtility of Hell appears in this, he doth secretly and indiscernably despoil the Soul of that Pretious Jewel the Evidence of his Union, while he solicits him to a Dubious Tryal.

II. In regard the believing soul is led in a Devious Path, to weary his Perplexed soul in, wherein all his labour will be in Vain, by consenting to a doubtful Tryal of his own Evidence of Union with Christ received. When the soul staggers and wavers in the confidence of the Truth, of the Evidence of his Union which Christ received, and proceeds

proceeds in that timorous trembling wavering manner, to an Examination of that his Evidence, then the soul either seeks for a higher Evidence than what he received formerly, Or else he seeks for Infallible Demonstrations, from the effects of the former Evidence of his Union with Christ received, that that Evidence that he hath received is really from God. Now in case the Evidence of the souls union with Christ that the soul hath received, were the Evidence from that pretious Witness of the Blessed Spirit of Jesus Christ, the soul seeks all in vain to seek for a higher Evidence: Or else in case the soul seeks to prove certainly and infallibly, that that Evidence of his union with Christ that he hath received was from God, by the effect wrought in his own heart, the soul also labours in vain, in regard there is a necessity that the soul must be dubious and anxious about the truth of all that he conceives to have received from Jesus Christ, while the soul is dubious whether it be united to Jesus Christ.

III. In regard *Satan* indiscernably gains these advantages against the believing soul by soliciting the soul to this doubtful tryal of his own Evidence of his union. By *Satan* soliciting the soul to a doubtful tryal of the Evidence of his union with Christ received, he doth indeed appear in *Angelical* Glory, Cloathed with a Glittering Garment of Heavenly Light: He thus bespeakes the poor believing soul; Take heed O Soul thou beest not Deluded in this great matter of Eternity, Mens hearts are naturally too ready to presume, faith *Satan*, take heed lest thou Befool thy self

with vain hopes : Thus he seemeth to be the Messenger of the blessed God to the believing soul, sent on purpose to press one of the blessed commands of God unto the Soul, that it should try, examine, and prove it self, only he secretly mixeth a cursed principle of darkness, with that precious beam of light; he incites the believing Soul to a dubious, anxious trial and examination of the evidence of his union; and so consequently, procures the Soul to reject the blessed evidence of his union, that the Lord in the riches of his mercy hath vouchsafed to the believing Soul; whereas the Spirit intends a pretious believing trial, for the Souls more abundant establishment and consolation, that it may be filled with joy and glory.

Pre. 2. Secondly, I shall premise, That the believing Soul to whom the Lord hath vouchsafed a clear evidence of his union with the Lord Jesus, ought not to diminish in the least degree his confidence of the Lords will, to accept even his Soul into union with the Lord Jesus, whilst he endeavours to try and examine his evidence of union received, whether it be from God, or whether it be a diabolical inspiration. Such is the absolute necessity of the Soul in the trying the evidence of his union with Christ, to stand fast in this his confidence, that in such a degree and measure as that Soul wavers in this his confidence, in the same degree is the Soul incapable of a right examination of the evidence of his union with Christ received : So that in case the confidence should wholly fail, the Soul is wholly incapable of a right

right examination of the evidence of his union with Christ. This will appear in two things.

1. In regard it is by the acting of this confidence, that the Soul is disposed to receive the clear evidence unto faith of his union with the Lord Jesus. The Soul is disposed to this two ways.

1. By the acting of this confidence the Eye of the Soul is fixed upon that glass, through which the light that evidenceth to the Souls faith, the Lords will to admit him into union with the Lord Jesus, shines. The glass wherein the Lord discovers his will to admit him, is his word, wherein he declares it is his will to admit every Rebel and Enemy that will, into union with the Lord Jesus, and into union with himself through him. Now the Eye of the believing Soul, is only fixed and established upon this blessed word of God, through the lively actings of the Souls confidence, because this is the object of his confidence, and the object is only in ~~them~~^{view} when there is acting of faith upon the object.

2. It is by the acting of this confidence that a clearness is maintained in the Soul, whereby the Soul is suitable to discern that light that doth evidence unto the Souls faith, the Lords will to admit it into union with the Lord Jesus. The confidence failing, a multitude of objections and reasons, this way and that way, arise in the soul, every one of these objections scruples and reasons, is like a Mote in the Eye of the Soul, which prevents his clear discerning of what the light of the blessed spirit put upon it. Now by the acting of this confidence, those objections, reasonings, and scruplings, are silenced and suppressed, and so a pre-

precious clearness is maintained in the soul, a readiness to discern whatever beam of Heavenly light the spirit should cause to shine forth from that pretious word, that it is the Lords will to admit it into union with the Lord Jesus.

2. When this confidence in the Soul fails, it makes the Soul incapable for a just trial and examination of the evidence of its union with Christ, in regard the acting of this very confidence of the Lords will, to admit the Soul into union with the Lord Jesus, is the very matter of evidence unto the Souls sense, that it is united actually to the Lord Jesus. Now when the act of the Souls confidence ceaseth, then is the very matter from whence the Spirit doth manifest to the Souls sense, its union with the Lord Jesus, taken away. How shall the blessed Spirit cause the believing Soul to see its self believing, when there are not the believing actings in the Soul? It is not the habit of any kind of holiness that the Spirit doth manifest to any believing Soul, to be in it self, but it is the acting of any holiness whatever, that the Spirit doth cause the Soul to discern in it self, from whence it discerns actually its union with the Lord Jesus: So that then the confidence of the soul failing, or ceasing its actings, the very original of the souls evidence unto sense, of his union with the Lord Jesus, is taken away.

Secondly, The believing Soul ought not only to forbear the diminishing of this his confidence in the Lords will, to admit his Soul into union with the Lord Jesus, while he proceeds to the trial of his evidence of his union with Christ received, But he ought also to forbear the diminishing

nothing of his confidence, that he is actually united to the Lord Jesus already, in case the Lord through a clear evidence hath begotten such a precious confidence in the Soul. The believing Soul ought to say concerning that his confidence, as Job said concerning his, *Job 27.5. I will not remove my integrity from me*; I will not let go this my confidence, till I have proved and examined the evidence of my union with the Lord Jesus, from whence this confidence did arise. This also may appear in two things.

1. In regard the diminishing of this confidence in the believing soul, before the trial of the evidence of his union with Christ received, is an infinite injury to the sweetest Comforter, the blessed Spirit, who through the manifestation unto the Soul that he is united to the Lord Jesus, establisheth the Soul in that precious confidence. The rejecting of that confidence so wrought by the blessed Spirit, is a slighting of the spirit in his most precious Office, and a disparagement of the very witness of that blessed Spirit.

2. It is a most sinful unconstancy and fickleness, to reject any thing received, before clear demonstration of the errour of the soul in receiving. It is contrary to the order that the Lord requires, should be in all the motions of the soul; which is, that they should be subject to the power of holy, sanctified reason: So that this confidence before trial ought to be maintained, in its full strength, in case such a confidence was begotten by an evidence formerly received, that he is actually united to the Lord Jesus.

Quest. But here is a question then by the way would be opened. But will the Soul say, wherefore then are the commands given by God to prove and examine our selves, whether we be in the faith, and so consequently to examine the evidence of our union with Christ, if we must not be dubious and anxious, whether the evidence of our union with Christ received be true or no, before we proceed to the trial and examination of them?

Ans. 1. For answer to this question by the way briefly. I answer first, that these Commands of Souls examining themselves whether they be in the faith, are given universally to all Souls, on purpose that deluded souls by the trying and proving themselves, might discover their own delusions, and discern their lying confidence of their acceptance into union with the Lord Jesus.

2. These commands are given on purpose to believing souls, to maintain the life of the confidence of the Lords will, to admit them into union with Christ, and the confidence that they are admitted into union with the Lord Jesus. These commands are occasions to Souls truly united to the Lord Jesus, to review over the grounds of their confidence, of the Lords will to admit them into union with Christ, and of the Lords actual admission of them into union. Now the more the Soul views the ground of his confidence, the more it views that blessed word of God, that reveals the Lords will to admit even his Soul into union with the Lord Jesus in case he accepts it, and by the Souls gazing upon that blessed word, it discerns

discerns more of the truth and certainty, infallibility and unchangeableness of that word, and the more frequently and fully the Soul discerns that, the stronger is its confidence in the will of the Lord, that he will admit even that his Soul into union with the Lord Jesus, and thence there is more occasion for the blessed Spirit to irradiate the souls believing act, to enable the soul to see and feel it self to believe aright, by which means the actual confidence of the souls admission ^{into} union with Christ lives, and is maintained in its strength.

3. These commands are given that there might be more preparedness against all assaults that are made from Hell against those souls. Through this examination believing souls have their confidence maintained in its life and strength, and so are fortified against temptation, because it discerns clearly the foundation upon which his own confidence stands.

4. The Lord gives these commands on purpose to draw forth into exercise, all manner of holy dispositions in the believing soul. This is done by the renewed view of that light, that doth evidence unto the souls faith, or unto the souls sense, its union with the Lord Jesus; Then is the precious subjection of the Heart to the will of God in all things acted, then is the correspondent love of the soul, answerable to the Lords love to the soul drawn out in its strength, then are all the thirstings after near communion with God in Christ acted.

Pre: 3. Thirdly, a third thing to be premised is this, That there are many sinful distempers incident to believing souls in the times when they are

are doubtful of the truth of the evidences of their union with Christ, which whenever they do prevail in any soul, during their prevalency, they do incapacitate those souls for a just trial, and true examination of the evidences of their union. There are especially four of those sinful distempers, incident unto believing souls at such a time.

1. There is an impatiency and frowardness of spirit, under the obscurity of that truth of their evidence of union with the Lord Jesus, incident to every believing soul. Indeed our spirits are naturally impatient under every burden, but when any Arrows from the Almighty are shot into the Conscience, or any Arrow from Hell stick fast there; I mean any doubtfulness, any terrors and fears of the fulness of their conceived evidence of their union with the Lord Jesus, then are their spirits in a superlative manner prone to fret, and vex, and fume, by the prevailing of unruly passion. Thus *David* under the doubtfulness of the Lords fulfilling a promise made to him, breaks out into most dreadful impatience, in *1 Sam.* 27.1. *I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.* So in *Psal.* 116. 11. *I said in my haste all men are liars.* So *Psal.* 31. 22. *I said in my haste I am cut off from before thine Eyes.* So the holy man *Job*, *Chap.* 3.3. and *Chap.* 6. 8, 9. Now during the prevalency of this distemper of impatiency and frowardness of spirit, under doubting the truth of their evidence, their spirits are made uncable of a just trial and examination of the truth of the evidence of their union with the Lord Jesus. There are two ways how this sinful distemper doth incapacitate souls, for the just examination of the evidence of their union.

1. It doth prevent a serious deliberate view of the evidences of their union with Christ that they have received, by drawing out the intentions of their Spirits, to look upon the grounds of their fears of the falseness of the evidence of their Union. When any passion prevails in any Spirit, it draws out ~~the whole~~ strength of the Soul that way; Now the intention of the soul being drawn out, to look upon the object of his fears, the grounds of his doubts, and the matter of the suspicion of the falseness of his union, by this the soul is made unsuitable to take any right deliberate view of the evidences of his union.

2. Impatience of Spirit under the doubtfulness of the truth of the souls evidence of his union with Christ, doth occasion every seeming opposition to the truth of the souls evidences, to appear greater than it is in its own nature. Thence it is frequent with souls under this distemper, every suggestion from Hell bears such weight upon the Spirit, as it is in a fume upon every such suggestion, conceiving there is abundant argument against the truth of his union; whereas upon the examination of the same objection by the same soul, with a quiet calm spirit, those objections appear to be invalid, to have no weight, nor scarce any colour, whereby they should manifest the falseness of the Souls evidence of his union.

II. The second sinful distemper is an irrationality that the Soul subjects it self to, in all the conclusions that it draws up against it self. Now whenever a believing Soul subjects himself to this sinful distemper, that he endeavours not to suppress every affection of Hope, Fear, or Joy, which

which is not founded upon some blessed word of God, then the Soul doth make it self incapable of examining and trying justly the truth of his own evidences of his Union.

1. In regard the Soul will of necessity be irrational in all its conclusions. ^{Now} ~~But~~ when the Soul is irrational in its ~~conclusions~~ ^{conclusions}, it is incapable of a just trial of the evidences of his union, it is incapable of comparing that blessed golden Rule of the Lord word, and his own evidences together.

2. In regard the thoughts of the Soul are all distracted, when any thing is brought to the thoughts for the truth of his union, that Soul without examination immediately entertains some hopes; Again, when any thing is objected to the Soul to prove the falseness of his evidence; immediately again the soul entertains fears, without examining the reality of what is objected against his evidence, and those hopes and fears continuing interchangeably working, make such distraction in the souls thoughts, that it makes it incapable for any deliberate view of the evidences of his union.

3. The third sinful distemper is a rashness, hastiness, or suddenness of spirit. Thus some doubting of the truth of their former evidences of their union with the Lord Jesus, because of some backsliding from God, that they are conscious to themselves of, will suddenly from such a place as that, *Heb. 6. 4.* concludes that they have sinned presumptuously, and that there is no renewing them again by Repentance, or unto Repentance: The words run thus, *For it is impossible*
for

or those who were once enlightned and have tasted of the heavenly gifts, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they fall away to renew them again unto Repentance: whereas did those Souls examine the intent of the Holy Ghost in these words; it were ~~easy~~ ^{easy} to discern that the Holy Ghost intend those who finally apostatize from God, not intending any slips and falls, and backslidings that are incident to every believing Soul: were there but a just examination of this portion ~~of the word~~, by collecting it and comparing with another word that would testify many Saints to have had their fallings and backslidings, after their tasting of the heavenly gifts, and after their being partakers of the Holy Ghost, ~~only~~ in a higher way than the Spirit means here; he mean here by partaking of the Holy Ghost, only some participation of common gifts of the Spirit: other Scriptures testify *David* and *Abram* to have had their falls, (yea almost every Saint after their tasting of the heavenly gift) and yet to be renewed again by Repentance. Now this distemper doth make the soul incapable of a just examination of the truth of the evidence of his union with Christ 2 ways.

I. In regard this rashness makes the Soul incapable of discerning the depths of Satan, whereby he endeavours to obscure the truth of every Believers evidence of his union with Christ. This sinful rashness occasions the Soul only to take a superficial ^{view} of whatever is suggested or propounded. Now Satans Suggestions have some sparkling of Angelical Glory, some vernish of truth and holiness, so that every suggestion of Hell, whilst the distemper of rashness

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prevails

prevails in the soul, cannot but be judged a sufficient ground to build a doubt and scruple upon, and then Satan being always watchful to maintain a dispute that he once began with the Soul, to make reply against whatever can be objected against his first suggestion; every of these objections of Satan they will be counted sufficient ground for the rash Soul to draw another false conclusion, or to strengthen the Soul in the drawing its former false conclusion.

2. This rashness also begets a confusion in the Soul, the soul drawing conclusion upon conclusion, upon every seeming ground; and one conclusion maintains contradicting another; a ~~contradiction~~ ^{conclusion} of hope contradicting a conclusion of fear, and there being no examination (through the domineering power of rashness in the Soul) of the truth of the one and the falseness of the other; these conclusions begin to fight in the Soul at once, yea multitudes of conclusions seem contrary each to other.

4. The Fourth distemper that doth incapacitate a Soul for the just tryal of the truth of his own evidence, is a prejudicial conceit against his own evidences, even before any examination of the truth of the evidences of his union. This is the sad distemper that prevailed in *Asaph*. *Psal.* 77. 2. *my Soul refused to be comforted*; he did refuse to receive any evidence that the Lord would be faithful. ^{But} certainly this was the distemper of the Church, *Lamen.*

3. 17, 18. Thou shalt remove my Soul far off from peace, I forgot prosperity; (or rather as it is rendered by some, I forgot God) it is most probable she refused to entertain any of those thoughts, that the Lord would yet be gracious. Hence it is, that many Souls under the Power of this distemper; do

study

study to wind themselves from under the Power of any truth that should lay hold upon their hearts, so as to answer their objections and cavils against their acceptance into union with the Lord Jesus. Now this Distemper doth make Souls incapable (while it prevail) of a just examination of the truth of their own evidences, in regard it causeth slighty, unworthy thoughts of their own union.

Pre. 4. Fourthly it is to be considered, that whenever any Soul is declined from, or decayed in his former activity and operation of holiness, he is then unfutable to examine and to try justly the truth of his own evidence or his union with Christ. He is unfutable in these five respects,

1. In regard the light of manifestation from the spirit is always suspended when the heart is in this decaying temper in holiness. When ever any heart decay in holiness, his first original decay is in the activity and strength of the precious believing disposition of the will, to close with and accept of the precious tender of the Lord Jesus to the Soul; now when the Spirits light of manifestation, whereby it doth irradiate the word to the Soul is withdrawn; the Soul must needs be incapable to examine the truth of his own evidences, for it is only through the Spirits irradiation or manifestation of the word, that any believing Soul doth at first clearly and satisfyingly, and unquestionably discern the Lords will to accept his Soul into union with the Lord Jesus, and therefore when this Light of manifestation from the Spirit is withdrawn again, it cannot be that the believing Soul should clearly discern that precious truth; and so long as the Soul enjoy not this evidence unto his faith of his certain acceptance ^{into} of union

with Christ: it is impossible the Soul should have any evidence unto sense, seeing the evidence unto sense doth wholly depend upon the evidence unto faith.

2. In regard all the opposite powers of corruption in his Soul, unto the Souls evidence of union with Christ, do renew in some degree their Tyranny over the Soul. Yea, not only so, but all the powers of corruption that do oppose the Souls union with Christ, are then furnished with renewed arguments and objections against the poor Souls acceptance into union, yea with such objections as nothing can answer but faith itself. As for example;

1. Then carnal Reasons' mouth is filled with new matter of objection against the Souls union. Carnal Reason, that said formerly, thou art a Rebel, an Enemy that have continued thus many years in enmity, therefore cannot be admitted into union with the Lord Jesus, can now say more; thou hast now dealt unfaithfully with God; thou art an Hypocrite, a Backslider; it is impossible that the Lord that bore thy enmity and rebellion, should bare thy falseness and hypocrisy.

2. Natural Distrust of God, cursed Jealousies and Suspitions of the Faithfulness of God, do renew their Tyranny also, when Holiness decay. Now natural Distrust, and cursed Jealousy of God can say, what dost thou think it is possible for the Majesty of Heaven, who is so just; who hath said he will avenge himself upon those that go on in their wickedness, should ever accept them into reconciliation with himself?

3. The

2. The corrupt Conscience renews his Tyrannizing Power when the Soul decay in Holiness. Now Conscience is furnished with a new Bill of Indictment against the Soul; it can now lay to the Souls charge, guile and deceitfulness of heart with God, and willing Apostacy from God, so that now it can with a full mouth pass the sentence of Condemnation against the Soul afresh, and is furnished with such arguments, as nothing but Faith can answer; nothing but a renewed vision of the Lords will declared in his blessed word, to accept of every poor, undone perishing Soul, be he as bad as an incarnate Devil, (in case the Soul will accept of union with him) can satisfy either carnal reasons, or suspicious arguments, or consciences accusations.

3. The Soul decaying in Holiness; is unsutable to examine the evidence of his union, in regard the Soul remain under an inevitable, an unavoidable necessity, to submit to the Judgement that Sense shall pass upon his Soul. Now Sense can pass no other Judgement upon a Souls estate that is decayed in Holiness; but that certainly the evidences of his union with the Lord Jesus that he conceive he had received, were delusions. Sense can see none of those precious inseparable effects of a Souls evidence of union with Christ, and sense can pass no other Judgement, unless it be captivated unto the power of Faith.

4. In regard there is apparent defect in such a Soul of the proper inseparable effects of the true manifestation to a Soul, that it is united to the Lord Jesus. The inseparable effects of an

evidence unto a Soul, that it is united to the Lord Jesus, is an height of Holiness; now when Holiness is decayed, Satan can say by a fallacious argument, thy evidences of thy union that thou thoughtest thou hadst, are delusions indeed: dost not see by the effects of the evidences, those that have evidences of their union with Christ, have their hearts in an adoring, admiring frame of God, they have their hearts enlarged to the utmost towards God in Christ; but thou hast a blockish, senseless, careless, heartless, mindless, unprofitable Spirit; surely, thy evidences therefore are delusions: Now indeed here is a fallacy in Satans arguments, that is hard to be discerned; here is a depth of Satan; here is one of those cunning devices that most Souls are ignorant of; He fails of nothing in his argument, but only in time: His arguments should have run thus; only Souls that have true evidence of their union with Christ, whilst those evidences remain; they are in an admiring adoring frame, and their hearts elevated and enlarged in all kind of Holiness: If this had been Satans major proposition, his assumption must have been false; then he could not have said, but thou in that moment and instant, when those evidences were given to thee during the continuance of those evidences in their clear light, that thou wert united, thy heart was not enlarged in all kind of Holiness, and taken with a precious admiration of the Lord Jesus.

5. In regard the Soul is under an actual provocation of the Lord, to a penal suspension of all

all kind of manifestation unto the Soul, either that the Lord would admit him into union with Christ, or that he is admitted. The Soul he can never discern the truth of his own evidence satisfyingly and infallibly, without the manifestation of the same light, both manifesting the word to the believing disposition, and manifesting the believing act also to the Souls apprehension: Now therefore the Soul must needs be unsutable to examine the truth of his evidence of union with Christ, while he is actually provoking the Lord to withdraw that blessed Spirit, and to suspend his operations unto the Soul.

Now here is a question necessarily cast in, to be opened by the way, before we can proceed any farther.

Que. But will the Soul say, if Souls under the dominion of impatiency, rashness, irrational affections, prejudicial conceits against the truth of the evidence of their union with Christ, and Souls under decays of Holiness, be unsutable for a right tryal of their evidences; then what sutable means remain for such Souls, under fear that the evidences of their union are delusions?

Ans. First, I answer, that the only immediate effectual, means of redemption of such Souls, from such torturing fears, suspitions and jealousies, that the evidences of their union with Christ are but delusions, is a renewed act of confidence, in the truth of the Lords word to their particular Souls; wherein the Lord doth declare his will, to give the Lord Jesus freely, to every

perishing Sinner that shall accept him, to mediate a reconciliation with the Father for him, though plunged into the most bottomless depth of Sin.

The Universal, Unlimited Offer of the Lord Jesus, to every particular, perishing and lost Soul, that will accept it, is the prime foundation of all the righteous hopes, that ever dwell in a believing Soul: all the expectations and hopes of believing Souls, are but the building upon that foundation; now when the building of the Souls hope shake, the only means to establish the building, is to add strength to the foundation.

This you shall observe was the remedy of the poor distressed Church, *Lament.* 3. 40. after many distractions in her spirit, many tossings and tumblings, this way and that way, when she had fed upon gaul and wormwood for a long time, at last she was constrained to take this course, to search and trie her ways, and turn again to the Lord; she was constrained now to make a new converting work of the matter; according as Christ tells his Disciples, except ye be converted, (when they were already converted) that is, unless you renew the close of your spirits with me, whereby you may have power against this particular sin: and I conceive this also may be intended by the spirit of God, *Isa.* 50. 10. in that sweet counsel to poor distressed souls in this case, that walk in darkness, and hath no light, that is, no refreshment, no comforting hope, to trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. Here is first a renewed act of Faith, immediately

immediately commanded to such a distressed soul, let him trust in the name of the Lord.

Secondly, here is a direct act of Faith, an act of Faith proper to the soul, that did never put forth a believing act formerly. Here is an act of Faith required and commanded to be done by these souls, without respect to any thing in themselves, without respect to their former comforts, whether they ~~be~~ be true or false, without respect to their receiving grace, whether they have received grace, or not received grace. It is worth the clearing, that this should be the only immediate means, to deliver such declined souls from under the fears, that the evidences of their union with Christ are but delusions. This will appear in three things,

1. In regard it is in this renewed act only, that the former evidences and manifestations given to such souls of their union with Christ, do shine forth in their perspicuity, clearness and satisfying power,

Then only when the soul doth thus close afresh, with that union with the Lord Jesus offered to it, there is both light within, and light without, whereby the soul is able to discern the former manifestation unto the soul, of its union with the Lord Jesus in their glory and power afresh.

2. In regard through this renewed act only, the proper effects of evidence of union with Jesus Christ, are again stirred up and drawn forth into their powerful operation. Now it is the souls apprehension of the want of those precious effects, that evidences of union with Christ do naturally beget in believing souls, that do occasion the poor distressed soul to suspect his own evidence

dences, and to be Jealous they are but delusions. Now the only means to deliver these dark and doubtful souls, from under the Tyrannical Power of these Jealousies and Suspitions, must be this renewed believing act, this renewed confidence in that truth of the Lords word, wherein he tender Christ in general to every sinner, in regard these blessed effects, the evidence of union with Christ do naturally beget in souls, are only made visible to these believing souls again by that means.

3. In regard both the incapacity of souls for the tryal of their evidences, and the unsutableness of souls for tryal also, are removed by that renewed believing act, in regard those distempers are healed. These are healed two ways.

First, By a more general influence of that believing act.

Secondly by a more particular influence.

First, By a more general influence of the believing act into those distempers. The believing Soul closes with the Lord Jesus tendered, so as he accept of a redemption from his sin, and from under the power of corruption through Christ: the notion under which the Lord makes the proffer of Christ unto sinners, is that he should mediate a reconciliation, between the Father and the souly shall so accept him that he should beget a precious amity between the Father and the Soul; establish the soul in a state of love, that is, the soul as well to be filled with love towards the Lord, as the Lord to be filled with love towards the Soul: Now in a souls acceptance of Jesus Christ thus tendered, the soul ac-

cepts

cepts of Christ necessarily as a Redeemer, to redeem him from slavery under those Enemies of the Majesty of Heaven, even Sin and Satan, so that there must be a State of Amity and Love between God and the Soul.

Secondly, this particular act, hath a particular influence into those particular distempers, that made the Soul incapable for a just examination of the evidence of his union with Christ.

1. In this renewed believing act formerly mentioned, there is a precious, sweet act of submission in the will of the believing Soul, to the will of God. Indeed the believing act is the highest submission to the Lord, that ever is given by any Soul to him, in regard the Soul in that case captivateth all his reason and Judgment only to the Lords authority, because the Lord hath spoken so, and so concerning his Soul. Now from hence, this renewed, believing act, hath a precious influence into the distempered Soul under impatency, to heal the impatency of the Spirit that domineered in him, for now the will is contented to wait on God, it is contented the will of God should be fulfilled in him.

2. This believing act hath a particular influence into the Souls rashness to heal that distemper also. In this renewed act, there is a renewed sense of the believing Souls absolute nothingness. Now from the Souls actual sense of his own nothingness, proceeds a holy awe, a holy reverential fear of the Majesty of Heaven, which doth hold in bounds the rash, disorderly Spirit, so that by this the Spirit is more careful how it draw conclusions from any precious word of God.

3. The

3. The believing act hath an influence upon the disorderly affections; the irrational affections which did also incapacitate believing Souls for a just examination of their evidences. In the believing^{act}, the Soul doth captivate all the imaginations and thoughts of sense and carnal reason, unto the truth and authority of God, and so all the disorderly affections, jealousies, doubts and fears, are even captivated and brought under.

4. This renewed, believing act hath an influence also into the prejudicial conceits, or opinions against the evidence of union received, to subdue those. In the believing act there is a renewed sight of the truth of the souls former evidence unto his Faith, of his union with Christ in some degree; so that the soul while he was under the power of his fears, that the evidence of his union were delusions, having lost the satisfying power of the manifesting light unto his faith, that he should be accepted into union with Christ, doth now again in this renewed act gain a sight and manifestation of that satisfying power in a manifesting truth that his Soul should be accepted into union with the Lord Jesus: Now thence the Lord discerns the causelesness of his own prejudicial thoughts, and opinions of his former evidences unto faith, and so consequently abhor himself, in that he dishonoured the blessed work of the Spirit.

5. Through the vertue and efficacy of this believing act that decay in holiness, which did make the soul unfutable to take a just impartial tryal of the evidences of his union with Christ are repaired, that appears in two things.

1. The mind of the believing soul is filled with all the

the notions, conceptions and apprehensions from whence Holy Actings do arise; are Maintained and Increased, and through the defect of which, Holiness Decays and Consumes in any Soul. These Holy Notions from whence Holiness proceeds, are principally these; That there is a fulness of all Love and Mercy, tendred freely by God to this Poor Unlovely soul, that the Lord is so infinitely rich in his love, that he doth pass over all that can be futable for the poor empty Soul, freely to it in Christ. Now it is impossible there should be a Renewed Believing act, without these Notions being brought fresh to the Remembrance of the Believing Soul.

2. All the Holy Affections are excited also to a Renewed exercise by vertue of the Renewed Act. All the Affections are under the command of these two, *Love* and *Hatred*: Now both these are excited to a Renewed Exercise, and that with a Mighty strength. by vertue of the Renewed Act. Love towards God is nothing but the very reflecting of the Lords love cast upon the soul, upon God again: The actings of love always proceed, from the Apprehensions of the Lords love to the Soul; Now in the Believing Act, there is an actual view, of the infinite unspeakable Riches of Love, to the Unlovely, Forlorn Soul, and thence Love is drawn forth in its very strength towards God again. Likewise Hatred, which command the other part of the Affections, is nothing else but the Displacency that is in the Will against any object whatever, which affections do naturally proceed from the souls love: Now therefore the hatred of the soul is properly against Sin, and whatever is contrary to God and his Will. In the same degree that Love
act.

acts in the soul towards God, in the same degree doth hatred work towards every thing that is contrary to God: Now by the stirring up of these two, all the other Holy Affections also are excited into their exercise; thence the decays of Holiness are sweetly repaired, and the soul put into a sutable temper for the tryal of his own Evidence.

Ans. 2. Secondly I answer, That all the Lords Ordinances and Appointments, for his peoples souls to injoy Communion with himself in, are also mediate and second means of the delivery of those souls from the dreadful Tyranny of the Fear and Jealousie, that the Evidences of their union are Delusions. Thus Prayer, Conference, Meditation, hearing the Word, are all secondary means to wait for the spirit to breath in power from the Lord Jesus; to enable the soul in this Renewed Believing Act, and to continue the Believing Act in the soul. So that you see a sufficient means left for these Distempered or Declined souls, that are either Uncapable or Unsutable, for a just examination of the Evidence of their Union, to deliver them from Fear and Terrour, that the Evidences of their Union with Christ Received are Delusions. Now in Regard the question is about a matter so practical, I shall therefore turn the last Answer into a kind of Advise, Beseeching and Instructing every Distempered, or Declined soul in Holiness, to take this course, to strive for deliverance of his soul from under the power of his Tormenting Fears, that the Evidences of his union with Christ are Delusions: And for that end I desire you would take these four Directions.

Direct. 1. First that you forbear for a little season, the Trial and Examination of your own Evidence with

with the Lord cease a little to Plead your Title with the Lord; Spend not all your thoughts about what Evidence you have Received, as though there were no good to be expected, except your former Evidences were real.

Direct. 2. Secondly let me advise you to take a strict account of your own hearts, of all your fears, and all the grounds of your suspicions, whereupon you suspect that your evidences were delusions: gather together and sum up all ^ehypocrisie and falseness, the unconstancy, the looseness, the vanity, the rashness, the blindness, that's now brought to your remembrance, to prove your evidences received were but meer delusions; gather together all the defects, of those precious effects of real evidence from God to any soul of its union with Christ, that you apprehend your soul's want; and further suppose them all to be true, take all for a little season for granted; suppose that your heart was false, and that you were wholly and altogether an Hypocrite, that all the workings of your spirit were nothing but common workings of the blessed spirit. But, then

Direct. 3. Thirdly search the holy records, the Lords blessed word for all the descriptions of those to whom union with Jesus Christ is freely tendered, and find out whether thy soul supposed to be in the estate fore-named be excluded from the number of those to whom union with Jesus Christ is freely tendred. Search from Scripture whether thou canst find any one Hypocrite, any one captivated soul, by the Devils deluding reasonings, any one false hearted treacherous wretch,
ever

ever excluded from the number of those, to whom the Lord freely offers union with the Lord Jesus; search whither any lost Soul, any Rebel, whether any rational Creature to whom the Gospel of Jesus Christ comes, be excluded from the number of those to whom the Lord freely offers union with the Lord Jesus: strive & beseech you now to gain that clear apprehension, that so at last thou maist baffle the Devil in all his arguments, and silence him in one word; saying, well though I have been false to the blessed Majesty of Heaven all this time, though I be now under thy cursed power, O Satan, though thou holdst me fast in thy cursed Chains of Darkness, yet thou must say, the blessed Majesty of Heaven, he that can never lye, tells me that union with the Lord Jesus, and so Redemption from thy cursed slavery is freely offered to my Soul still; the Lord tells me his will admits me to be still one; with Christ, if I can be contented that he should mediate a reconciliation between the Father and me.

Direct. 4. Fourthly, Plead with thy opposite contrary mind, to make thy heart consent to the blessed word of God, wherein he doth offer union with Jesus Christ, and himself through Christ, to every Soul that shall accept him. Gaze again and again upon the blessed tender; say to thy unbelieving mind; O my crooked and unbelieving mind. Wilt thou not consent to the truth of yonder Majesty of Heaven, yonder God of truth it self that cannot lye; say O my soul if thou wilt accept yonder union with the Lord Jesus, behold what transcendent glory thy soul shall be filled with,

O my Soul wilt not thou trust to the truth and faithfulness of the Lord, when he makes such an offer; wilt not be content to subject all thy reasons, and sensual Arguments to his Authority? Still strive again; say, O my Heart, though thou hast been an Hypocrite, though the Devil hath couzened thee these many years, though thou hast dealt falsely with the Lord all this time, yet the transcendent love of yonder God ceases not to work towards thee, O take up thy rest O my Soul, credit the Lord upon his word, and wait O my Soul for the fulfilling of his word to thee. This is the prime, effectual, infallible means of the deliverance of your poor perplexed tortured Souls, by the tyranny of fear that your evidences are delusions; And this is the never failing means of discovering to your poor dark obscure souls, the truth and reality of these your evidences, that your Souls cannot discern. Truly Souls of all the directions that ever I commended to you, I must set a *probatum est* upon this remedy; It is a tried one Soul, it is an approved one, an experienced one; I beseech you follow it: Let your Souls be held no longer poring upon your former evidences, as though you had no spring of refreshment but in those: Suppose your Heart to be as bad, as the Devil possibly can make it, yet strive with your unbelieving Mind and Heart to accept anew of union tendered to your poor, lost, perishing Souls in the Lord Jesus.

Pre. 5. In the fifth place I shall further premise this, That an impartial, just, and righteous examination of the evidences that any soul hath received of his union with the Lord Jesus,

can only be taken while those evidences remain in their perspicuity, clearness, and satisfying power. The evidences of a Souls union with Christ, being only precious, orient beams of Heavenly light, sent forth from the blessed spirit of light into the obscure Soul, joyned also with a precious exciting power, sent forth from the same Spirit to stir up the light inherent in the same Soul too, while the evidence is gone, it cannot be that any Soul receiving such evidences; should justly try, weigh, examine, and prove the reality of those evidences, no longer than those evidences do continue. There must be light without, and light within, to enable a Soul to make an examination of any thing: And both the light without, and the light within, being the evidence it self to the soul of its union, thence it is there is a necessity of the examination to be prosecuted or followed, only while the Soul enjoys those evidences in their brightness, clearness, and satisfying power. The evidences of the Souls union, are beams of Heavenly light, sent down from the Father of light, on purpose to bear testimony to a Soul of union with the Lord Jesus: And thence indeed it is necessary that these Witnesses should be heard speak for themselves, before any trial of the truth and reality of their testimony can be made by any Soul; Now these Witnesses never speak for themselves, but while they are actually bearing Witness; that is, while those precious beams of Heavenly light, do actually shine into the obscure soul; Now when once those beams of light are withdrawn, the soul is now in question whether the

the Lords will be, to admit his Soul into union with Jesus Christ or no. Now that those righteous examinations of the evidences of union, can be only taken while the evidences do thus continue actually in the soul, this I conceive may be collected from *John 7. 17.* *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* The words are an Answer to a question that the Jews propounded to Jesus Christ, or they are a prevention to a Question that the Jews might have propounded: Christ had affirmed, that the Doctrine that he taught, was not his own, but his Fathers that sent him, *v. 16.* Now it might be objected: But how can you prove that your Doctrine is your Fathers, and not your own? How will you manifest it to those that deny your Doctrine to be divine, that it is Divine? Christ answers, *If any Man will do his will, he shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God;* As if he should say, whosoever's Heart shall be in a precious readiness, actually to obey my Fathers will, he shall actually know the Doctrine whether it be of God. So that two Propositions are laid down in the words; the one expressly, the other implicitly. The first is affirmed by Christ, that the discerning of the truth and divinity of pretious Gospel truths, is only peculiar to obedient Souls.

Secondly, It is implicitly affirmed, That whatever soul is disobedient to the Fathers blessed will, cannot (during his disobedience) discern^e truth, divinity, and infallibility of Gospel Truth: Now thence may be collected, that believing

souls do enjoy the spirit of discerning, in their way of obedience, and do best and most perspicuously and clearly understand the Lords blessed will, and see the reality of every truth of the Gospel, and the infallibility and certainty of its coming from God. Now mark, then only believing souls do yield obedience to the Fathers will, and do actually obey Gospel truth, when their souls receive through believing some evidence, at least in some degree, that the Lord will receive their souls into union with himself in Christ, through their believing in him. Every believing act is but the consent of the believers heart, to the truth of what the word bears witness of; which is in effect, nothing but a believers receiving the evidencing light of the blessed word, that the Lord will admit his soul into union with himself in the Lord Jesus, in his accepting of him; So that the believing soul being then only obedient to the will of the Father (in the prime way of obedience which is Faith) when he is receiving some evidence of his union with the Lord Jesus, thence it appears, that a just and impartial, a righteous examination of the evidences, that the soul hath received of his union with the Lord Jesus, can only be taken, while those evidences do actually continue in their clearness and power. For the further clearing of this, take these two reasons.

I. In regard then only the soul is fitably disposed to take the examination. That will appear in divers particulars.

i. It is only then when the Evidence unto a soul of his union do actually remain, that the understanding

standing of the soul is enlightned by the blessed spirit, and inabled to conceive of, and to apprehend aright, any truth from the blessed Word of God propounded to him. Even when the understanding of the soul is renewed, and some pretious beam of Heavenly Light Communicated to the poor soul, (so that in a Metaphorical Sence, the blind soul became a seeing soul ? yet there is a necessity also that the same spirit, that Communicated the seeing eye to the understanding, should also Communicate the seeing of the eye ; It is necessary that the same spirit that Communicated the Habit, should Communicate also the Act ; the same spirit that gave a Principle of Divine Knowledge to the soul, must also act the same Principle of Spiritual Knowledge, to make the soul actually know, or understand any Spiritual, Holy Mystery aright ; Now then, when the Evidences to the soul of its union with the Lord Jesus actually remains, then is the mind and understanding of the soul thus actuated by the Blessed Spirit, then is the Principle of Holy Knowledge drawn forth into exercise, so that the mind is then inabled to discern into the Mystery of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, thence it appears, that the soul can only then take a Righteous Examination of the Evidences of his union.

2. In regard it is then only, that the soul is Conquerer over the natural Enmity of the Mind, that oppose the Minds, consent to the truth that doth evidence unto the soul its union. The Carnal Mind is Enmity against God ; Now in the same degree the believing soul remains unregenerate, enmity still possesses the believing mind, and then

only hath the Believer conquest over those reliques of enmity that possess the mind, when he hath actual evidence of his union with the Lord Jesus ; now it is only then when the enmity of the mind against God is brought into captivity to the Law of faith, that the Soul is fuitable to take the examination of the truth of his own evidences of his union with Christ, in regard the mind now is disposed to accept or agree unto those truths of the Gospel, from whence the Spirit doth manifest unto the soul its union with Christ.

3. In regard it is then only, that the Soul understands and believes what the true Celestial Star is, from whence those beams of light, that do really ~~come~~ from God, evidence unto a Soul, his union with Christ must flow and arise. The pretious word of the ever-living God, to every lost sinner, declaring that his will is to admit every of those Souls that will, to be reconciled to himself in Christ, is that precious, bright, orient Star, from whence those beautiful beams of light, that do or may discover unto a soul, his union with Christ must arise : Now it is then only, when the beams of light shine from the Word perspicuously and clearly unto a soul, declaring his will to admit of reconciliation with them through the Lord Jesus, that they understand and believe this to be the true Heavenly Star, from whence the light that evidences unto them their union must flow.

4. In regard It is then only, that the irresistable power, that those precious beams of light contain in them (that do evidence unto any soul really

ally from God its union with Christ) is ready to take impression upon the heart. The irresistible power that the beams of light contain in them, is the Authority of the blessed Majesty of Heaven. They are nothing but the discovery unto the Soul that the Lord hath spoken it, that it is his will to receive the soul into union with Christ. Now this irresistible power of these beams of light, only take impression upon the Heart, according to the lively actings of holiness in the heart; And the lively actings of holiness in the heart, are only according to the degree of light the soul enjoys, discovering unto it the Lords will, to receive him into union with the Lord Jesus: So that when those beams of Heavenly light shine most clearly in the most transcendent beauty, then is the heart filled with the most lively, holy actings, then do love, and fear, and joy, and delight, working their power and strength; And therefore it is only that the Authority of God speaking, or declaring any thing to the soul, take the deepest impression upon the soul.

5. In regard the believing disposition in the will of the soul, is only then in exercise in its power and strength. The prime evidence unto a soul of his union, hath been discovered to you, to be only an evidence unto faith, and in like manner the prime demonstration of the truth of that evidence, must be a demonstration given to faith only: Reason must not aspire so high to be the Judge of faiths action; Still it must be another act of faith, that must pass a security upon the former act of faith: So that thence when the

believing disposition infused into the will of the believing soul is strongest in exercise, then only is the soul suitable to take a righteous examination of the evidences of his union with Christ.

2. It is only then when the evidences of the soul's union with Christ are clear and perspicuous, that it is suitable to take examination of his evidences rightly, in regard of the evidences themselves, which then only appears in their native self-discovering glory. It is the inseparable property of those beams of Heavenly light, that shine from the word of God, to discover themselves really to be from God, even by their own native lustre and glory: Those beams of light come forth with the name of God written upon their foreheads; so that the believing soul no sooner beholds them, but he reads the name of God written upon them; now this their native self-discovering glory, never appears to the soul, but when these beams of light actually remain in the soul, in their perspicuity and clearness, and therefore when the spirit suspends its influences, then the soul cannot behold those beams of light what they are.

Quest. There is another Question that here interpoeth it self, which must of necessity be answered.

Believing souls will now reply in this manner, If an impartial examination of any souls evidences of his union with the Lord Jesus, can be only taken while the splendor and brightness of his evidences remain in the soul; then what use should souls make of the evidences they conceive they had received of their union with Jesus Christ, when the lustre and orient brightness of their evidences be eclipsed, and their commanding power
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enervated or wounded, that their evidences cease to witness unto them their union with Christ.

In order to the satisfaction of souls in this scruple, we shall lay down divers Propositions.

Prop. 1. First, whenever the celestial glory of those pretious beams of light, that the Lord vouchsafes to cast into any believing soul, to evidence his union with Jesus Christ, be dark, and those invincible and impregnable demonstrations, that the blessed spirit gives unto the souls faith, to prove and demonstrate its union with Christ be weakned, yet it is then doleful weakness; yea, abhorred wickedness in any soul, to cast off all confidence of the Lords admission of his soul into union with Jesus Christ. Though the oratory light of the blessed spirit, or the superadded light to the word, that causes the word to give so clear and satisfying a testimony unto faith, of its union with Jesus Christ be withdrawn and suspended yet there is a Heavenly shining, burning Lamp of the written word of God, that stands constantly shining to discover to the faith of the believing soul, the open bosome of the love of the Lord Jesus, and his outstretched Arms ready to grasp the soul into the nearest union: Therefore it must needs be dreadful horrid wickedness, for any soul to neglect, slight, undervalue, or disregard the light of that pretious written word, because those Heavenly beams of superadded light that the spirit sometimes gives are by the wisdom of the Lord, or through the occasion of the souls own iniquity sometimes suspended. The Command of believing stands as an everlasting command founded and built upon the meer written word, making a pretious discovery of

of the Lords will to admit every lost, perishing soul that will, to be reconciled, 1 John 3.23. Now thence it is most wretched disobedience in any soul, when he hath lost that glorious light of manifestation from the spirit, to disobey that precious Heavenly command also.

Prop. 2. Secondly, Whenever any soul subjects himself to the Principle of darkness and unbelief, that still dwells in him, upon the Lords withdrawing the brightness and glory, of that satisfying light of the spirit, that did evidence unto the soul his union with Christ, and cast off his confidence of the Lords admission of his soul into union with Christ, then the soul is incapable while he so remains of making any pretious, holy use of those former evidences that his Soul enjoyed of his union with Jesus Christ.

1. In regard while the soul so remains, there can be no holy conception of the evidences that his Soul did formerly enjoy. First take holiness for all kind of strictness and righteousness, and conformity to the Lords blessed will, and in that sense there can be no righteous conception of his former evidences; The soul cannot understand them what they are, nor discern them as they were.

Secondly, Take holiness effectively, for these conceptions that do excite and quicken a believing soul unto holy actings, and in that sense there can be no holy conception of his former evidences, while the soul so remains: All such conceptions or apprehensions of the way of God towards us, ~~are~~ ^{are} holy effectively, that is, that produce or quicken a soul to holiness, are such as do apprehend

apprehend some beam of excellency shining forth from those ways of God, in relation to that particular souls good; now while a soul casts off all his confidence of the Lords will, to admit him into union with the Lord Jesus, he cannot conceive of his former evidence in such a manner, as to conceive any beam of excellency shining forth from God, in relation to his particular soul.

2. While any Heart so remains, he is incapable of making a holy use of his former evidences, in regard the activity of all holy affections whatever depend upon the activity of that believing disposition, they live and die together. The moving Principles that move holy affections objectively, are the believing conceptions and apprehensions of God; that is to say, the apprehensions of the Lords will, to receive the poor loveless soul to be reconciled to him, through his union with Jesus Christ: And therefore while a soul casts off all his confidence, that the Lords will is to admit his soul to be one with Jesus Christ, there is a defect of moving Principles, to move the affections to their exercise; and so consequently there can be no activity of any pretious, holy affections.

3. In regard all the Ordinances, that should excite and quicken the heart, to the holy use of his former evidences, are made useless. While the soul enslaves himself to carnal reason through unbelief, not believing Gods will to make him one with Jesus Christ, though the Gospel should be preached by the mouth of Angels, and they should be sent from Heaven to be mouths to those souls in Prayer, yet those Ordinances could have

no

no operation upon those souls; saith the Apostle, *Heb. 4. 2.* The word that was preached profited not, because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it: if there be not some degree of confidence in that great and grand Gospel-truth to the particular soul, there can be no mixing faith with any other Gospel-truth that should be Preached, so as to make it have a pretious efficacy upon the Heart.

4. When any Heart yields up himself captive to unbelieving reason, and so casts off all that his pretious confidence, it cannot make a believing use of his former evidence of union with Christ, in regard there is a continual decrease in all holiness, and encrease in all the working of corruption, while the soul so remains. The Heart is so naturally active, that it will be spending its strength in some kind of activity or other, and therefore when the holy actings of the fore-named precious confidence is sealed, the Heart will spend all its strength in corrupt workings; when the Heavenly plant of faith doth not grow and flourish in the soul, the weeds that come from the Devils Garden will be all flourishing, hardness, indisposition for God, hard thoughts of God will all be augmenting daily.

Prop. 3. Thirdly, No Soul ought to entertain such a superlative conceit of the use of those evidences of his union with Christ, that he formerly received, that he should make those his evidences the sole, or the primary, or the principal Prop or Pillar, whereupon he builds his confidence, that the Lord will admit his soul into union with Jesus Christ. The utmost use intended by God, that

that believing souls should make of former evidences received, can be but strengthenings and encouragements, to renew the strength of their confidence in his truth and faithfulness, to fulfil his blessed word unto their souls, It is utterly strange from the mind of God, that souls should make any one act of God towards or in the soul the principal Pillar, Rock and foundation whereupon to build its hope of his union with Jesus Christ. All those actings of the spirit of God, whether by way of Light and manifestation, or by way of infusion of holiness, they are merely arbitrary (excepting only the spirits constant influence for the preservation of the life of a believing soul) and consequently, changeable and various, according as the infinite wisdom of Heaven doth see suitable, for the estate of various souls: but now the Lord out of that transcendent riches of his love in Christ, hath prepared unchangeable Rocks, where the prime Anchor of believing souls hope should be fastned, unmoving Pillars that never shake, whereupon the foundation of their confidence must be laid, according to *Heb.* 6.17. he confirms it by an Oath, that by 2. immutable things, two things that were subject to no alteration or diminution, that is to say, by the word of the Majesty of Heaven, and by his Oath also, they might have strong consolation, that do flee ~~from~~ ^{for} refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them; that is, that do accept of the Lord Jesus tendred to them: So that the hanging thus the eternal estate of the soul upon the former evidences, is too high an use to put the former evidences too: It is the truth it self that the former
evidencing

evidencing beams of light manifest, that is only destined to that precious use, to build the confidence of the souls admission into union with Jesus Christ upon, even that truth that the Lord doth declare, that it is his will to admit even that particular soul into union with Jesus Christ, if he will accept it; and whenever scruples and objections and doubts possess the soul concerning the truth of any former evidences, the first-born of the souls endeavour should be taken up, in clearing that truth that the soul did conceive some beams of light did evidence to him.

Prop. 4. There is a strait command from the highest Majesty of Heaven and Earth, given unto every believing soul, to make a holy use, advantage and improvement of his former evidences of his union with Jesus Christ vouchsafed to him. That one Scripture gives sufficient testimony, *Heb. 10. 32.* *Call to remembrance the former days, in which after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions:* This the Apostle commands them in order to the strengthening of their confidence, *ver. 35.* Thus *Asaph* did, *Psal. 77. 5, 6.* When he was under darkness, when the powers of unbelief began to rage in his soul, and to tyrannize over him, then he began to make improvement of his former evidences of the Lords love, and favour to him, he remembered God, and was troubled; now he recalls himself, and begins to make diligent search into the former testimony of the Lords kindness to him, *I considered the days of old, the years of ancient times, I call to remembrance my Song in the Night, I commune with mine own Heart, and my Spirit made diligent search. I call*

to remembrance my Song in the Night ;] that is, the former comfortable Communion I enjoyed in God ; how God delighted himself in Communion with my soul, and my soul delighted it self in Communion with God again, how God spake peace to me, and I answerably rejoiced in God again :

And I Commune with mine own Heart] I looked over the Records of my Heart, and made diligent search, to see what experience of truth, and goodness, and loving kindness of God to my soul are treasured up there. Yea, then to help himself further, *ver. 10. 11.* he endeavours to make some improvement of the manifestation of the Lords love and kindness, truth and faithfulness even to others ; *I will remember the works of the Lord, surely I will remember thy wonders of old.* There is a command from Heaven upon believing souls to make use of their former evidences, and there is some kind of inherent power in every believing Soul to act something in order to this holy use, or improvement of his former evidence. Now the holy use of those former evidences, that believing souls are engaged from Heaven to make, they are various. We shall endeavour to sum up 5. or 6.

1. Every such soul ought to gather from his former evidences of his union with Jesus Christ, some strength to his present confidence, that the Lord will admit his soul into union with Christ. I beseech you mistake not, I speak not of those probable fluctuating hopes, that some souls have enjoyed of their union with Jesus Christ, from some apprehensions of some present actings of the Holy Spirit in their Hearts, to clear to them in some degree their union with Jesus Christ, and to foster up some hopes of it. Those I say, though
they

they may be, and are frequently such as really descend from the spirit of Jesus Christ; yet also from such conceited, and supposed actings of the sanctifying spirit of Jesus Christ, proceeds most of those soul-deluding hopes, that poor blind souls are deluded with, by the Prince of Darkness: And therefore because the difference between these two, is a matter of so great difficulty to discern, I durst not perswade any soul who conceives that he hath had evidences of his union with Jesus Christ, whose evidences have been only some flashes of light, from some conceived actings of the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, to believe firmly, impreguably, and unmoveably, that the truth and reality of those his evidences did descend from God, when he doth not discern them: Those fluctuating evidences unto sense, questionless if Souls adhere unto them, they must put them upon the tryal by sense again. Therefore now observe, I speak of the pretious, clear, infallible evidence given unto a believing soul, from the blessed Spirit of light and manifestation, to clear unto the Souls faith unquestionably, that the Lords good will is to admit his particular Soul into union with Jesus Christ, in case his Soul will accept it; through which evidence unto faith also, the evidence unto sense hath attained a clear beam from the Spirit of light, discerning the truth of the close of the believers Heart with the blessed will of God; yet mark also, that which I speak hath its relation solely to those evidencing beams of light given unto the believers faith of his union with Jesus Christ. Now I say, though such a soul be unsuitable to take a just examination

examination of those evidencing beams of light formerly given to his faith, when their glory is obscured and darkened, yet the Soul ought to believe the truth of those evidencing beams of light, though it cannot so clearly and sensibly discern it. The matter that was evidenced to the Soul, is no more than that there lies an Obligation upon the Soul from Heaven continually to believe; And therefore the matter that was evidenced being true, and the Soul engaged from God to believe it, the Soul also stands engaged to believe the truth of that his former evidence that his Soul received, concerning the blessed will of God towards him; and from the remembrance of such a former manifestation, given unto the Soul by the blessed Spirit, concerning that blessed good will of God towards him, the Soul ought to gather heart and strength, and courage to renew the confidence of his poor, wavering, trembling, unstable Heart.

2. The believing Soul ought from the remembrance of his former evidences, given unto his faith of his union with the Lord Jesus, to foster and nourish a lively hope in his soul, that the same blessed light of manifestation (to manifest unto his faith clearly his union with the Lord Jesus) may return. That experience that such a Soul have had, that there is a time of light, and a time of darkness that the wisdom of Heaven seeth suitable for believing Souls, that there is a Night and a Day, as well in the Spiritual life, as in the natural life, ought to be a ground to maintain a lively hope, that when it is Night, Day may break, and therefore it is his Duty unquestionably to nourish and cherish such a lively hope.

3. From the remembrance of its former evidence, the Soul ought to instruct it self in the obscurity, darkness, and dreadful blindness of his own mind. The believing Soul ought to say within himself; *O when the Spirit of Jesus Christ irradiated the blessed word of God; how clear, how unquestionable was it to my Soul, that it was the Lords blessed will to receive my Soul into union with Jesus Christ, if I will embrace him; and though I have now the same word to testifie the same thing to my Soul, yet how dark is it to my Soul for the present, how hard is it for my poor blind Mind to receive and apprehend, that the Lords will is to receive this my Soul into union with Jesus Christ?*

4. From the remembrance of the Souls former evidence, the Soul ought to instruct it self in the mystery of the Lords way towards believing Souls. From hence the Soul may learn, that the Lord carries on the Soul towards full Communion with himself through Christ, as well by sensible decays in Communion, as by sensible encreases in Communion; And from thence the Soul might instruct it self, that joy and peace, ravishment of Spirit, triumphing acts of faith, are not so inseparable from believing Souls, but that they may be wanting, that they are not absolutely necessary to be constant, at least to the Souls attaining unto perfection of Communion; so that thus the Soul may learn to adore the Lord in apprehending the unsearchableness of his ways, even towards believing Souls, the unsearchableness of his Wisdom, that neither Man nor Angel can measure.

5. From

5. From the remembrance of the Souls former evidences, whose brightness and glory is now eclipsed, the Soul may instruct it self in the absolute necessity of an intire, constant, uninterrupted dependance upon Jesus Christ for the Spirit of light and manifestation: The Soul ought in remembrance of that full satisfaction that it enjoyed when that blessed Spirit of light gave beams of light to his dark mind, to clear up the will of God revealed in his precious word; to say, *O how infinite is the necessity of hanging upon Jesus Christ continually, for the constant operation of the Spirit of light into this my dark Heart.*

6. From the remembrance of the Souls former evidence of his union with Jesus Christ; the Soul ought to collect holy Pleas, and pretious Arguments, to intercede with the Majesty of Heaven for the return of the blessed Spirit of light and manifestation unto his Soul. This was the constant practice of all the Saints, who had enjoyed any experiences of the Lords mercy and kindness, they did endeavour to engage the Lord to return when he seemed to be absent.

Many are the Arguments that a believing soul may collect from the former enjoyment of evidences of union with Christ, to plead with the Majesty of Heaven, to return with the same spirit of light and manifestation again to his Soul.

1. From the remembrance of the Souls former evidence, the soul may remember the pretious suitable disposition, that possessed his Heart for the worshipping of the Lord in every Ordinance.

Now from thence the Soul may raise a pretious Argument, wherewith he may go boldly to the Throne of Grace, and cry to the blessed Majesty of Heaven, *when shall that blessed Spirit of light return to this darkned Soul of mine.*

2. The Soul may remember the readines, the quickness, the activity of the Heart in all manner of obedience to the Lords blessed will. Now from hence the Soul may fetch a strong Argument, wherewith to come before the Throne of Grace; O my God may the believing Soul say, *When thy blessed Spirit of light had the pretious operation upon my Heart, what a blessed concurrence was there in this my crooked opposite will, to this thy holy will; O what an union of love was there, between this thy Majesty and my opposite Heart, how impatient then was my Soul, of any disagreement between my will and thy will, how readily was my heart disposed for any thing thy blessed Majesty commanded? But now alas Lord, now the workings of the Spirit of light are suspended, what a disagreement is there between thy Majesties will and my will; how strait and narrow, and weak, and feeble, are the inclinations of my Heart now to obedience to thy blessed will? Lord may the Soul say; Have respect to thine own honour, send down the Spirit of light into this dark Heart.*

3. The Soul may remember how highly the blessed Name of God was exalted and magnified in his Heart, when that blessed Spirit of light continued its blessed operation to evidence actually its union with the Lord Jesus. Now from thence, the Soul from whom the lustre and glory of these his former evidences of union with Christ

Christ is now Ecclipsed, may argue with the blessed Majesty of Heaven to send down the same Spirit of light and manifestation again to his dark Soul.

4. Even when the orient brightness, and Heavenly lustre of the Souls former evidences is Ecclipsed and darkned, yet then the Soul may remember the capaciousness, and enlarged openness of his Heart towards communion with God, while the orient lustre of the evidences of his union with Christ did actually remain. Now from hence the Soul may gather strength of Argument to appear before the Lord, to Petition the return of the blessed Spirit of light and manifestation again to his Soul: The Soul may plead that the suitableness, and right disposition of the Heart for Communion with the Lord, depends upon the enjoyment of the Spirit of light and manifestation.

5. Even when the orient brightness of the Souls former evidences are ecclipsed and obscured, yet then the Soul may remember how gloriously the lovely beauty, and Soul enamouring brightness of the way of holiness was transparent through him, when the Heavenly lustre of his former evidences did actually remain in the Soul. Now from hence the Soul may gather a pretious Argument, whereby he may lay an engagement upon the Majesty of Heaven, to send down the Spirit of light again: Thence the Soul may plead, that the lustre and Heavenly beauty of the ways of holiness to be manifested through him, depend upon his enjoyment of the Spirit of light and manifestation.

6. When the cammanding power of the evidence of a Souls union with Christ is ceased for the present, to evidence to the Soul its union, yet then the Soul may remember that the tender compassionate bowels of God have moved within him, and yearned toward his Soul formerly. Now from thence the feeble, almost fainting drooping Soul, may still gather more strength, and lift up its Head again, to claim the Spirit of light and manifestation, to be sent from Heaven into his dark Soul.

7. When the splendor, and beauty, and satisfying power of the evidences that the Soul have received of his union with Jesus Christ be decayed, yet then the Soul may remember, that all his abominable wickedness, and most cursed vileness, did not formerly prevent some movings of the Bowels of the Lords mercy towards him. Now hence may the Soul gather strength to plead for the returns of the blessed Spirit of light into his dark Soul. Hence the Soul may plead, that there is the same reason, the same motive to incline the Lords blessed will, to send now the Spirit of light and manifestation to it, that ever there was to incline his Majesty to the least thought of kindness towards it.

8. The Soul from whose Eyes some dark Clouds hath obscured the former lustre of his Evidences, yet may remember that some spark of holy confidence in the Lords blessed will, to admit the Soul into union with Jesus Christ, was formerly infused into his unbelieving Heart. Now from thence the Soul may again gather some strength, whereby to lay hold upon the Lord, and to engage him

him, to give as it were a new Commission to the Spirit of light to come down to his dark Soul: Thence the Soul may plead the Lords engagement, never to recall the gift once past, out of the hand of his pretious love, he having declared his Gifts are without Repentance; and thence the Soul may plead, that the Lord stands engaged to nourish up that confidence, so begotten in the Heart by his blessed Spirit.

9. When the irresistable commanding power of the evidence that any Soul hath received of his union with Christ be weak, yet then the Soul may remember the uselesness, the inefficaciousness of all terrors and distractions upon his Spirit, and the most blessed efficacy that the least glimpse of light, discovering to the Soul, the Lords will to admit it into union, had upon his Heart. Now from hence the Soul may cry to the Lord, and complain in the bitterness of his Soul, *that he understands not what his blessed will concerning him is, in terrifying and affrighting, suffering his Spirit even to be distracted with terror.* Lord may the Soul say, *Hath thy Majesty its honour from me this way? Is thy Name exalted in my Heart in this manner? Will my Heart ever bow in obedience to thy blessed Will, through the power of those terrors and distractions that are upon me?* This holy arguing and expostulating with the blessed Majesty of Heaven, and engaging him by Arguments, collected from what the Soul remembers, in his former evidences of his union with Christ, is the last holy use that the Soul may make of his former evidences of his union, when their Heavenly lustre, and commanding power and beauty cease. And I would perswade every obscure Soul, from

whose Eyes those sweet Heavenly beams of light are now hidden (with which his Eyes were once blessed) above all the other uses, to have a particular respect to this last use, thus to gain upon God, to insinuate its self into the love and favour of the Lord again, to engage the Majesty of Heaven by this kind of pleading with him, to send down the Spirit of light and manifestation afresh. This indeed is the very principal use of the former evidence, wherefor y^e present darkness overspread it, and that in these Two respects.

First, In regard in this kind of pleading, the poor decaying sparks of the Souls confidence, is kept in some degree alive. Now the stronger the Souls confidence is, the more suitable is the Soul to make a righteous examination, or just and impartial tryal, of those former evidences of his union with the Lord Jesus.

Secondly, In those pleadings, the Spirit of light may be again expected to return. The blessed Spirit, and all the actings of it, are reserved in the Golden Closet of the Promises, wherein the Lord hath engaged himself to Communicate whatever mercy and love shall be suitable to the poor believing Soul; and these holy pleadings are the Key to the Door of the Golden Closet; I mean, the Key of the Promise, to open the Door for the Spirit of light to have its free access. Questionless by such a holy improvement of former evidences as this, believing Souls might be much furthered towards the obtaining of the renewed operations of the spirit of light, and manifestation of renewed discoveries from the same Spirit unto

unto the Souls faith, of the Lords will to receive him into union with the Lord Jesus. Thus now you have the Question also cast in upon this occasion opened: It is apparent there is a pretious holy use that Souls may make of all former evidences when their orient brightnes is ecclipsed, and their commanding power is weakned, though the Soul cannot then take an impartial examination of those his evidences or put them upon such a righteous Trial whether they be really from God or no.

One consideration also I must add concerning knowledge, whether evidences of union received be really from God, or whether they be Diabolical inspirations.. The Soul must understand that this knowledge is a collection, or gathering of this conclusion, that his evidences received are really from God, from a certain, necessary, infallible reason. The difference between knowledge of the evidence to be really from God, and Opinion, and Faith, must always be kept clear in the Souls understanding, who shall be able to receive a right answer to that grand Question propounded. To believe the Souls evidences that he hath received of his union with Jesus Christ; to be really from God, is an act of the Soul that hath its foundation only upon the authority of him that relates, or discovers it to the Soul. There are two things whereupon faith is founded.

First, That the thing believed is spoken or declared.

Secondly,

Secondly, That the Speaker or Declarer is true and faithful. Now to have an Opinion that the evidences of the Souls union with Christ received, are really from God, is to collect or gather the conclusion of it from some probable reason, as from the adjunct, or the consequence that follow in his Soul upon his receiving the evidences of his union with Christ: But the knowledge that the evidences of a Souls union with Christ received, is really from God, is the collection of this conclusion to the Soul, from a certain, necessary, and infallible reason. Therefore your Philosophers in distinguishing between knowledge and opinion, define knowledge to be a certain true habit of the mind; And they define Opinion to be an uncertain habit in the mind. So that he that propounds the Question; How a Soul that conceiveth he hath received sufficient and satisfying evidence of his union with the Lord Jesus, may know certainly and infallibly, that the evidence of his union received is really from God, he must understand that he asks, How a Soul may demonstrate to himself from certain necessary reasons, that the evidences of his union with Christ received are really from God. Now I beseech you every Soul, believing or unbelieving, remember as far as possible, all the considerations that have been premised about this Question; and withall these fixed and established in your minds, proceed with me to make a righteous trial of the evidences that you conceive your Souls have received of your union with the Lord Jesus.

So then all these considerations premised,
our Question propounded must be thus sta-
ted.

Quest. *How shall any Soul that conceiveth he
hath received, and doth actually enjoy, certain and
sufficient evidences of his union with the Lord Je-
sus, demonstrate from certain necessary and evi-
dent reasons, that those his evidences are really from
God?*

Ans. For Answer then directly to the Que-
stion. There are but two kind of Demonstra-
tions, whereby a Soul can demonstrate to its
self the reality of his evidence received proceed-
ing from God.

You must understand we are now speaking of
knowledge; and what was spoken before of
faith, must not come into our remembrance in
this thing: For you must remember we gave
you a distinction between knowledge, faith, and
opinion, we look not for opinion now; That
is, some probable ground of our union with
Jesus Christ: nor we do not look to faith which
is the declaration of Gods will to admit it into
union with Jesus Christ: But we look to know-
ledge, and there are but Two Demonstrations,
a Demonstration *Priori*, and a Demonstration *à
Posteriori*; A Demonstration taken from the
Causes, and a Demonstration taken from the Ef-
fects.

The

The first and most certain ground, whereupon the Soul may prove its union from God, is taken from the causes; now the Causes are various: But the Two Principal Reasons must be taken from the Two Principal Causes. Now there are but Two Principal Causes of the Souls union with the Lord Jesus, both which concur together, and are never separated one from another. The Two efficient Causes instrumental, is the Lords blessed written Word, and that pretious Spirit of Jesus Christ. The written Word is the more remote cause, and the Spirit of the Lord Jesus is the more immediate efficient cause.

Now because the reason whereby we may draw any conclusion is most strong, that it is taken from the most immediate cause of any thing. And in respect that the Spirit of Jesus Christ is the most immediate efficient cause (though but still instrumental) because the Spirit doth more immediately send down those beams of light, that do most clearly reveal to faith the Lords will, to take the Soul into union with Christ, and also those beams of light that discover to the Soul the integrity of his Heart in believing; Thence we shall first speak of that reason which is taken from the blessed Spirit of Jesus Christ; and so I answer thus, That the first primary and principal reason from whence a Soul may conclude, that the evidences of his union received are really from God is, that those evidencing beams of light doth proceed from the blessed Spirit of Jesus Christ. And it

the knowledge of this, that they are those beams of light proceeding from the Spirit of Christ, by which a Soul attains the most certain and infallible knowledge, that his evidences were from God; by this he attains that which is most properly called knowledge; according as the Philosophers say, to know a thing, is to discern the nature or being of it by its most proper immediate cause. But now least the Soul should say, you here answer one doubt by another, which is as great a doubt, and leads the Soul but on into further darkness; the Soul is as doubtful of this you will say, whether those beams of light proceed from the Spirit of Jesus Christ, as it is whether they were from God? Therefore for your satisfaction here must be Two things opened.

First, That the light that doth proceed from the blessed Spirit of Christ, to evidence unto any Soul its union with Jesus Christ, doth evidence, that it doth proceed from the blessed Spirit.

Secondly, It must be opened, that the light that so proceeds from the Spirit to evidence to the Soul its union with Christ, is the most potent, and powerful demonstration, that begets the most certain knowledge of the Souls union with Christ, even the most proper and highest kind of knowledge.

First, It must be manifested that the light that proceeds from the Spirit, to evidence to any Soul its union with Christ, doth evidence it self to proceed from the Spirit. There are such sparklings of Divinity in those precious

tious Beams of Light, that the spirit sends down
 into any Believing soul to discover its union, that
 the eye that beholds those Beams of Light, see the
 very Divinity of them, he seeth that they come
 out from God : There is such Coruscations ; or
 Bright shinings of Heavenly Glory upon those
 Beams of Divine Light, as gives a satisfying dis-
 covery that they are from the Spirit of God :
 Those beams of light they bear the Image of God
 upon them, they have in a manner the name of the
 blessed spirit of Jesus Christ Ingraven upon them,
 that the soul that beholds them even reads the name
 of the blessed spirit Ingraven there : So that those
 Beams of light (by an inseparable property that
 the Lord hath annexed to them) do so discover
 their Original to be from the spirit of God, as
 they do satisfy every soul to whom they are sent
 down, and make it unquestionable that they are
 from the Spirit of God : Yea the name of the spi-
 rit of God is so plainly Ingraven upon those beams
 of Light, that the soul so easily discerns it, that all
 Fears, Doubts, and Suspicions, all workings of
 Jealousie, that those evidencing beams of light are
 not from the spirit, are Banished by their Mighty
 Power : I mean, the soul injoying those, at that in-
 stant while their lustre, their Heavenly bright shin-
 ing Coruscations and Glory continue, the soul fears
 not that they are Delusions, he doth not so much as
 question that they are Delusions : According to
 that in 1 John 2. 27. *But the Anointing which ye
 have Received of him abideth in you :* That is, the spi-
 rit of Jesus Christ Communicated to you abides in
 you, which is here called the Anointing, because
 according to that in *Isa. 61. 1, 2.* The pouring out
 of

of the spirit of Grace and Holiness upon Christ as Mediatour, is called the Anointing of Christ for his Mediatorial Office, and so the participating of the spirit by Believers, is called the Anointing of Believers to partake of their head : Now saith he, the Anointing abides in you, that is, the spirit abides in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teaches you all things, and is truth and is no lye : The spirit teaches you all things ; He doth not mean of all truth, and the whole Counsel of God, for that no believing soul yet understood while he dwelt in Houses of Clay, (*Paul* himself understanding but in part) but he speaks of the truths forenamed, the grand Gospel Truths, the spirit it self teaches you all things, that is, of these things mentioned ; Teach ye that you shall have eternal Life in Jesus Christ : And mark, and is truth and is no lye ; That is to say, it teaches you so that you know it is truth, and you know ye are not deceived while that so teaches, or in its teaching : And therefore he saith in the former words, that they need not that any man should teach them ; Not that there is no necessity of the Pretious Ordinances of Jesus Christ still for their souls, whereby the truth of Jesus Christ should be brought to their Remembrance, and the Pretious Actings of the Believing Disposition in all these drawn forth, for that's necessary for every believing soul ; But thus, you need not that any man teach you, that is, you need no other Confirmation of the truth of these things, then what the Spirit of Jesus Christ gave you ; you need not that any man should come to give a clearer discovery of the certainty and truth of those. And thence also in 1 Cor. 2. 12. The
Apostle

Apostle affirms, *that they had received the Spirit of God, that did teach them to know the things given to them of God, &c.* That God had revealed his truth to them by the Spirit. Now this must be further confirmed by divers reasons, that the light that proceeds from the Spirit of Christ, revealing to the Soul its union with Christ, doth evidence to the Soul that it doth proceed from Christ.

1. In regard it is the testimony of God unto the Soul concerning its union. Now that witness or testimony of God to the soul concerning its union, if it did not evidence even by its own light, that it did proceed from the Spirit of God, it were no witness of God at all unto the Soul concerning its union. It is of greater concernment to the Soul in this case, to understand who it is that speaks, than to understand what it is that is spoken; unless the Soul understands clearly, that the light that now came into his Soul doth proceed from the Spirit of God; he understands not that it is Gods witness: It is not so much the thing that is testified, as the consideration of him who it is that testifies, that satisfies the soul, or makes it to be the Witness of God to the soul.

2. In regard the evidence is the testimony from God, on purpose to give the soul satisfaction concerning his union, to revive, refresh, and comfort the soul, by the discovery of his union with Christ. Thence it is, that Christ in his promising to the Disciples to send his blessed spirit to dwell in their hearts, while he was absent from them, John 14. 16. He names the spirit the Comforter, revealing what the Office of the spirit is by his Name. Now should not the light from the spirit, that doth evidence

evidence to the soul his union with Christ; evidence it self also to be from the spirit of Christ, that testimony of God that is from that light to the soul, could give no satisfaction to the doubtful scrupulous soul: Therefore doubtless the light from the spirit doth always carry sufficient evidence for it self, to evidence from it self whence it is; seeing God intends those beams of light to give satisfaction to the soul.

3. In regard that light from the spirit of Jesus Christ is the highest witness, or testimony unto a soul concerning his union. Now seeing that those beams of light are the highest witness, there is a necessity that those beams of light should evidence themselves what they are, by an inseparable property of their own, otherwise their witness must be subject to be tried by the testimony of something else; so that the highest witness of the spirit must come to be subject to this holy quality and that precious disposition.

4. Should not the light that proceeds from the spirit to discover to a souls faith and sense his union with Christ, evidence it self to be from the spirit of Christ, then the blessed testimony of the spirit of Jesus Christ should be altogether vain and useless. Those sweetest beams of heavenly light are the spirits voice; and should it speak in an unknown tongue, that is, should not its voice be distinguished from all other voices, the spirit should but beat the air, that is, all the light that it discovers to the soul of its union with Christ should be frustrated, void and of none effect.

5. In regard the spirit of Christ necessarily fulfills the office to which Jesus Christ hath appointed it.

The Lord hath destinated that Spirit of his to Seal up Believers, to Seal up their Inheritance, *Eph. 1. 13. Chap. 4. 30.* Now a Seal is destinated on purpose to give a peculiar Confirmation of the thing Sealed. Yet likewise the spirit of Jesus Christ is destinated to be the Earnest in the Believers soul whom it is sent to Seal, to be the Earnest of his Inheritance, according to that in *Eph. 1. 13.*

Saith the Original, it is Translated [which,] but it is rather [who] is the earnest of our Inheritance, or who is the Pledge : The word signifies some part of a price paid beforehand, to assure the Payment of a full Price, for some Commodity bought : So that the meaning is, who is given you as a part beforehand, of that full Inheritance that you may expect, and may be the better assured that you shall enjoy the full Inheritance. Now did not the spirit of Jesus Christ make those Beams of Light (sent down into any soul to discover to them their union with Christ) to discover themselves to be from the spirit, the soul should remain dubious after the clearest Testimony of the spirit, whether he had received the spirit of Christ or no, and so the spirit of Christ in his Sealing Office should be no earnest, seeing the spirit must be an earnest as it discovers it self to be in the soul.

6. In regard it is the Light of the spirit of Jesus Christ, that is the only Discoverer of all Divine things, that makes all things manifest. It is light that makes all things manifest ; Now the Spirit of Christ is the only spirit of Light and Wisdom, and Revelation : So that there can nothing be made manifest to the soul, but what some Beam of Light from the spirit

spirit of Light must manifest: And then observe it, whatever reason any soul should study to prove the Beams of Light, that were sent down into his soul (to discover to him his union with Christ) were from the spirit, even that reason must be discovered in the Truth and Reality of it, by some Beam of Light from the spirit, and then unless the Beam of Light from the spirit doth carry sufficient Evidence in it, to discover it self to be from the spirit, the soul should be deceived in the reality of that very reason, that he studied up to prove, that the former Beams of Light that were sent down into his soul came down from the spirit. To speak more plainly thus, seeing the spirit of Jesus Christ is only the spirit of light, whatever Holy Dispositions, whatever Precious Heavenly Quality any Believing soul shall discern in it self, it must be discerned by a Beam of light from the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, The second thing to be opened is, That the light that proceeds from the spirit to discover to the soul its union with Christ, is the most Potent, Invincible Demonstration of its own proceeding from God, which begets the most Certain and Infallible knowledge in the soul of his union with Christ. That precious light of the spirit of Jesus Christ, doth so clearly discover it self to be from the spirit of Christ, that there can be no reason that can make any Addition or Increase of that precious clearness: It shines so brightly with the very Image of the spirit of Jesus Christ upon it, as nothing can make it more manifest to be from the spirit than its own light. This will appear in divers particulars.

I. In regard that Beam of light that proceeds from the spirit, to discover to the soul its union with Christ, discovers nothing but what is infallibly true. Not only what is infallibly true in it self, but it discovers nothing but what is infallibly true to the souls Apprehension to whom it doth discover it. Now when the Principles of a Demonstration are infallibly true, then hath it the first property of the highest and most Potent Demonstration.

II. In regard that light which discovers the first light of the spirit, to be the light of the spirit, doth also again Evidence it self to be the light of the spirit also. Now that's the highest demonstrative Reason, to prove that any thing proceeds from God, that is to say, that it is discovered by the spirit of God: Now that light of the spirit's first light, doth plainly demonstrate that to the soul that it comes from the spirit of God: So that there is no other Medium, no other reason that can be imagined higher, to prove that the first light from the spirit, that discovers to the soul its union with Christ was from God.

III. In regard it is the most evident perspicuous discovery of those beams of light to be from God, that can possibly be given. Every reason from whence any Conclusion is Collected, must be clearer and more evident than the Conclusion it self. Now it is only the light of the spirit of Jesus Christ, which is more evident and clear than the Conclusion it self drawn that the Evidences are really from God: So that if it were possible for a higher proof to be made, of the certainty of the beams of light, that discovers to a soul its union with Christ, of the certainty

tainty of their being from God, then this very light that these Beams of light contain in themselves, then there must be some light clearer than the very first light, that proceeds from the spirit of light and manifestation, whose office it is to discover all things to the soul.

IV. In regard it is that light only that can truly inforce, or cause the Conclusion to be drawn, that the Beams of light that did discover to the soul its union with Christ were from God. Now that's the highest kind of demonstrative Reason, to shew the truth or reality of any thing, when the principles, (that is the reasons from whence the Conclusion is Collected) are the cause of the Conclusion: Now thus the light of the spirit was those Beams of light, that discovered to my soul, its union with the Lord Jesus was really from God: why? because they came from the spirit of God. Such Premises as these, to say what the spirit of God reveals and discovers, that must of necessity proceed from God, doth even force the Conclusion to be drawn: Whereas nothing else hath so much power in it to cause the Conclusion to be drawn, as that light that proceeds from the spirit. Now from these things opened, you may hence take notice, that every soul to whose Faith and Sence, the spirit of Christ hath truly Revealed their union with Christ, have full satisfaction, clear undoubted satisfaction, concerning his union with the Lord Jesus, in all its most Serious, Deliberate Meditations and Contemplations: So that so long as those Pretious Beams of light from the spirit, do remain actually shining into the soul, there is no kind of Doubt, Scruple, or Darkness in the soul about its union with the Lord

Jesus ; So that any soul that hath received this true discovery from the spirit of light, both unto Faith and Sense, of his union with the Lord Jesus, need not inquire for any more proofs, than his own soul possesseth at that instant, that God and his soul are one through Christ.

§. Secondly, The second Instrumental cause, that shines into any heart really from God, to discover to that heart his union with Jesus Christ, is the Lords Precious Word. That Heavenly light that shines into any dark and doubtful heart, to reveal its union with the Lord Jesus to it clearly, is only a precious spark that sparkles forth from the Precious Burning Lamp of the Lords Written Word ; And it is the Blessed Spirit of Jesus Christ that doth as it were Incense and Inflame that burning lamp of the Lords Blessed Word, and cause it to send forth those Blessed sparks into dark hearts ; And it is that same Blessed spirit also that enlightens those dark hearts, to see, discern, and behold those sparks, that that burning lamp of the Lords Word send forth : So that the spirit of Jesus Christ and the Written Word, are bus Concauses that joyntly and sweetly joyn together, to enlighten the Doubtful soul, and clearly reveal its union with the Lord Jesus. So that the soul hath for his assurance, the hand of the ever Blessed God, and the Testimony of God that it is his own hand : He hath that secret light that discovers it self to be of God, which discovers to the souls faith his union with Christ, and to his sense the truth of his own believing act ; And hath the Written Word, which is a Letter Written from the Almighty to loveless souls, that bears Witness also to the same thing. So that

that then the second reason, next to the prime reason (that the light that the soul receiveth proceeds from the Spirit of God) is this, that the soul beholds it clearly shine forth from the Lords Written Word. But to clear this there must be two things opened.

First, That a believing soul ought to receive the light that discovers to him his union with the Lord Jesus, from the Written Word of God, and ought to receive that light as certain and infallible, because it shines from the Written Word.

Secondly, That the Lords Pretious Written Word, doth discover to particular believing souls, their particular union with the Lord Jesus, both unto their Faith, and unto their Sence.

First, It must be cleared, That a believing soul ought to receive the light, that discovers to his soul his union with the Lord Jesus, from the written Word; and ought to receive it as certain and infallible, because it proceeds from the Written Word. This appears.

I. In regard it is the direct Command of Heaven, that believing souls should stick and cleave only, to that truth that is discovered in the Lords Written Word; And that believing souls should be confirmed in the truth of that Pretious Gospel of Jesus Christ, because it is contained in the Lords Written Word, in the book of the Old and New Testament.

This you shall find in that 2 Tim. 3. 14, 15, 16. *Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a Child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee Wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for*

Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness.

First it is necessary here to observe the occasion: you shall find in the beginning of the Chapter, the Apostle had fore-told of perilous times approaching, wherein there should be many false Doctors in the World, in whose Snarls many souls should be taken Captives; Therefore least *Timothy* also should be Intinared, the Apostle Writes these Verses on purpose, to endeavour to Establish *Timothy's* soul in the truth; Saith he, *Continue those in the things which thou hast Learned, knowing of whom thou hast Received them*: Now the Arguments he useth to settle *Timothy* in the truth are two;

First from his *Apostolical Call*; knowing from whom thou hast learned them; From an Apostle of Jesus Christ that had received it from Jesus Christ.

The second Argument is in those next Verses, *That from a Child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, The Writings of the Prophets, and those Holy Men of God, that spake as they were moved by the Spirit of God, that the Lord desired to be Written as a Rule*: Now this being his Argument, to continue in the truth of the Gospel Received, the Apostle doth illustrate it by three or four things.

First, He discovers to him that those Writings of the Holy Men of God that he had been acquainted with; were able to make him Wise unto Salvation, through Faith in Christ Jesus, that is, if his soul did receive those discoveries in those Scriptures by Faith; So that the Apostle intimates thus much; That it were infinite Folly in *Timothy* to receive any other Doctrine, than what he had taught, and what he had learned to be written in the holy Scriptures, seeing the Wisdom of God to Salvation was contained in them.

Secondly

Secondly, He illustrates this Argument by a second reason, and that's taken from the Authority of those Holy Scriptures. The matter contained in them, saith the Apostle is such, as was given by Inspiration of God: The matter contained in them was but the Breathing of God, into the souls of those men that Wrote it; It is Gods Voice to thy soul, saith he, therefore take heed thou continue in the Doctrine there discovered.

Thirdly he illustrates this Argument by a reason taken from the use of those Holy Scriptures, and that is in these Words; *It is Profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness.* *It is Profitable for Doctrine*, that is, for all matters of Faith; It will instruct thee, saith he, in every thing that the Lord commands thy soul to believe. Yea it is profitable for reproof also, for overthrowing all false Opinions, that are contrary to the Faith of Jesus Christ. Yea for Correction, that is, for the Reproving all Evil Manners whatever, for Correcting all Vicious ways whatever they are. Yea for Instruction in Righteousness, that is, they are profitable to discover what the Will of God is to thee full, so far as is needful for thee to know. Yea the Apostle seems to add a fourth reason to illustrate this Argument, and that is in those next Words, which he takes for the end of Writing these Holy Scriptures, and that is the Perfecting the Man of God; *That the Man of God might be Perfect, throughly Furnished, Furnished unto all Perfection.*

It appears that the soul ought to receive the light that shines from the written word, in regard the written word of the Lord is given by God himself, as an everlasting, unchangeable rule for the tryal

are comended for trying the doctrine which Paul

trial of truth and falsehood. Hence it is that Jesus Christ himself, when he was to make it manifest to the unbelieving Jews, that he himself was the Son of God, he fetcheth his highest testimony from the written word, as you may observe, *John* 5. in comparing *ver.* 31 and so on, and *ver.* 39 together: He tells them he would not bear witness of himself, least his witness should not have evident demonstration enough to bear witness to him, because it is from himself; but he tells them *John* the Baptist bears witness to him, *ver.* 33. He gives them a second argument from his work, *ver.* 36. and *ver.* 37. *The Father that sent him bare witness of him.* but *ver.* 39. to give that that should be an undeniable testimony, even unto the apprehensions of the Jews themselves, he tells them that the Scriptures, (the holy writings of those holy men of God) they testify of him, saith he, *search the Scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal Life, and they are they which testify of me.* Hence when Paul began to preach Jesus Christ, and to prove that Jesus of Nazareth whom he preached, was the Mediator between God and man, he perswaded them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses and out of the Prophets, *Acts.* 28. 23. and thence it is that in *Acts* 17. 11. That those Men of Berea preached, by searching the Scriptures daily whether those things were so.

Secondly it must be cleared, that the written word of God doth particularly reveal unto believing souls their union with Christ, both unto their faith and unto their sense.

First, It doth reveal particularly unto their faith, their infallible admission into union with the Lord Jesus. This appears in regard the Lords testimony that

that he will admit every soul that will, into union with Jesus Christ, is absolutely universal, without the least ^{exception} ~~acceptation~~ or limitation; so that it comprehends every particular soul whatever to whom the Gospel is preached; according to that in John 3. 15. *That whosoever believed on him should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* So in John 6. 37. *He that cometh to Jesus Christ he will in no wise cast out.* And in Acts 10. 43. *That whosoever believe in him should have Remission of Sins.* and that known place Rev. 22. 17. *Whoever will, let him take the water of Life freely,* wherein it is apparent that every particular soul is included, that the Lords testimony to every particular soul is as certain as if the particular soul were named, that the soul shall be admitted into union with the Lord Jesus: if the soul will accept it, if the soul will consent to his truth, and trust to his truth and faithfulness for the fulfilling that his word. Now whereas it is objected, that no particular word speaks to a particular soul; and says thou *Thomas*, and thou *John*, or thou *Elisabeth*, or thou *Mary*, shalt be accepted into union with the Lord Jesus, if thou wilt accept him.

1. I answer that either every particular is perfectly comprehended in the universal offer, and universal command of believing, as if the Lord should name every person to whom he speaks; or else there can be no faith of assurance concerning any Gospel-truth whatever. Else there can be no assurance that our Bodies shall rise again from the dust, and appear before the judgement-seat of Christ. It is no where said, thou *Thomas*, or thou *John*, or thou *Mary* shalt arise out of the dust again and come

to judgement ; yet I suppose every one that hath the least beam of spiritual light shining down into his soul will acknowledge that the written word of God doth reveal particularly, that this soul and that soul, even his own soul shall arise from the dust and come to judgement. Now it is apparent, that there is as clear a discovery in the written word to any particular souls faith of his certain^r resurrection from the dead and coming to judgement.

2. Either all those particulars are to be fully comprehended in that universal offer, and universal unlimited command of believing, or else there were no obedience to the will of God commanded to any particular soul whatever, nor no disobedience to the will of God reproved. It is no where said, thou *Thomas*, or thou *John* shalt worship the Lord in Prayer ; It is no where said, thou *Thomas*, or thou *Mary* shalt receive me as thy only God, and worship me only. Likewise no disobedience to the will of God were reproved : It is no where said, thou *Thomas* shalt not steal, thou *John* shalt not lye, thou *Mary* shalt not commit adultery : yet I conceive, thou whose believing disposition is most out of exercise at present, dardest not say, God hath not said to thy soul do not steal, do not lye, that God hath not commanded thee to worship him in his ordinances appointed. So that it is clear the word of God doth reveal to particular souls undoubtedly, their certain admission into union with Jesus Christ in case they accept him.

Secondly, The precious written word of God, reveals unto particular souls sense, their particular union with the Lord Jesus. That is to say, whenever the spirit of light and manifestation sent from the Lord

admission into union with Christ,
as of his certain

Lord Jesus shall irradiate the precious written word of God, so as to make its own heavenly light shine into a dark heart, and also irradiate at the same time or cast beams of light upon the precious believing act, that the same spirit of Jesus Christ hath begotten in that soul, then that light that the written word of God holds forth particularly, declares to such a particular soul its certain actual union with the Lord Jesus. Now the written word of God speaks to the sense of a believing soul, his union with the Lord Jesus in these two ways.

1. In its general description of the nature of that believing act that the Lord requires from the soul. Now the written word describing the nature of that believing act that the Lord requires in general, and declaring that believing act to be required in the same manner from every soul; that written word of God doth particularly reveal unto such a particular soul's sense, his actual union with the Lord Jesus: as thus, the written word of the Lord describes the nature of the believing act to be a coming to Jesus Christ, *Mat. 11. 28.* to be receiving the testimony of God that he gave concerning his Son, setting to its seal that God is true *John. 3. 33.* A receiving the Record that God hath given of his Son, *1. John. 5. 7, 8, 9.* To be a receiving of Christ himself, *John 1. 12* To be a will in the soul concurring with what the Lord tenders, *Rev. 22. 17.* Now I say in the spirits describing the general nature of that believing act the Lord requires, it doth speak particularly to the believing soul, when the spirit is so evidencing to him his union with the Lord Jesus, and declares the soul's certain and infallible union with Jesus Christ. As thus, the spirit having
first

t y perishing, lost, loveth soul into union with himself
 through Christ, in case y soul will accept him, &

first revealed to the souls faith, the Lords will to admit, having sweetly encouraged the soul, yea powerfully, irresistibly, effectually commanded the soul, to set to his seal that the Lord is true; and to say *Lord be it unto thy Servant as thou hast spoken*; then the same spirit irradiates that written word that describes the general nature of the believing act, letting the soul discern, that the believing act is a sweet consent of the mind and heart to the truths of the Lord in the tender of the Lord Jesus to him; to reconcile the Father and him; and then the spirit irradiates also the precious consent of the mind and heart, that holy trust and confidence that is then in the soul, and then the written word saith particularly; that thou dost consent, to accept of what the Lord thus tenders in Christ to thee, thou art certainly and everlastingly united to the Lord Jesus; thou art the who dost receive what the Lord hath propounded in Christ to thee, and therefore thou art certainly lodged in the everlasting arms of the Lord Jesus.

2. The second way that the written word declares unto the particular souls sense, his particular union with the Lord Jesus is by its description of the constant certain and inseparable operation of the believing disposition, describing the manner of the working of the believing disposition, or describing the various effects of faith.

1. By the written word declaring that the proper operation of faith; is by love to Jesus Christ, *Gal. 5. 6.*

2. By declaring that the proper operation of faith is to abase the soul in it self, and make it altogether nothing; *Rom. 3. 27.*

3. The Scripture doth declare that the proper operation

operation of faith is by purifying the heart, cleansing it from all unholy dispositions, *Acts. 15 9.*

4. In declaring that the proper operation of faith is an high and unpeakable estimation of Jesus Christ himself, *Phil. 3. 8 9.* Now thus the written word, declaring the proper manner of the operation of faith, doth declare particularly unto any particular soul, his union with Jesus Christ: and so consequently the same written word declares, that in whatever heart the believing disposition thus particularly works; there is that precious believing act the Lord requires, there is that precious faith unfeigned that Jesus Christ commands in his precious Gospel; and so it speaks particularly to a particular soul, thou dost believe with that precious faith unfeigned that Jesus Christ requires; and thus the spirit doth but make this written word of God speak to the souls understanding, what it doth always speak in it self, which is, that that particular soul doth now believe according to the will of God: So that thence it appears the word of God doth speak, and declare as particularly to a believing soul, his union with the Lord Jesus as if it did speak to any soul by name, for that light that discovers to the souls sense and feeling, or knowledge his union with Christ, is but the discovery of the truth of his own heart in believing the written word speaks as plainly to a particular souls sense and Knowledge; his union with the Lord Jesus, (that is, declares to him that he doth particularly believe) as it doth declare to any particular rebellious obstinate sinner that he particularly doth sin; the word faith, whosoever walks thus or thus transgresseth the will of God; now this speaks to every particular soul so sinning.

Que

Que. But the soul may say , how can a soul know that those Books of the Old and New Testament are the Lords own word ? May there not be some mixture of men ?

That the Scriptures are the written word of God.

Ans. For answer to the question , first negatively, secondly affirmatively.

I. Negatively , I answer that the soul cannot be assured by all the powers and possibilities of men, no not by any created power , that the Books of the Old and New Testament are the written word of God. Though I deny not , that the testimony of men may give some kind of ground to the soul to believe it ; and I fear the greatest number among us have no other ground, yet no testimony of man can assure the soul sufficiently , that these are the Lords written word : the matter contained in the written word of God is altogether spiritual , and therefore it must be a beam of spiritual light that must satisfyingly, and sufficiently discover to a soul , that the spiritual matter is the truth of God , and did proceed from God.

2. All the most exquisite reasoning, that the most elevated wits of man can extract , are not sufficient to demonstrate satisfyingly unto a soul , that the Books of the Old and New Testament are the written word of God himself indeed. If it were so, then the wisest of men should have been ready to receive the word of God as the word of God ; whereas the Scripture testifies, the most wise have been most opposite to receive it 1. Cor. 1. 26. Scribes and Pharisees, the wisest of the People, were the greatest opposers to our dearest Redeemer.

3. The written word of God barely and simply taken

taken, without the Mighty Power of the Spirit concurring with the Word, is not able to demonstrate it self to be the Word of God. Questionless if it were, then whoever had been partaker of the Written Word, or had heard the Word Preached that is Written, must in like manner have given credit to it; whereas the Scripture Testify, that when Jesus Christ himself spake of those things he had wrought, some Opposed and Blasphemed.

But then I answer affirmatively.

I. That the Blessed Spirit of God only, is able to demonstrate Clearly, Evidently, Satisfyingly, and Infallibly unto a soul, that the Written Word of God is the Written Word of God. This the Apostle affirms directly 1 Cor. 2. 9, to 12, that the Spirit had Revealed those things to them, which they by the Power of Reason could never comprehend; And that all the things given to them of God, are Revealed by the Spirit to be so given: And the Written Word of God is none of the smallest gifts of God to his people; Therefore consequently it reveals that also to be given to them: So likewise he affirms, that it is the Spiritual Man that Judgeth all things (that is of truths) that is, it is only the Man Begotten by the Spirit of Jesus Christ unto God, and led by the light of that Blessed Spirit of Jesus Christ, that is able to Judge of Truths, to Judge what Truths have their Original from God, and to Judge what have not their Original thence: It is the Spirit also, saith he, that searches the deep things of God, that discovers the very Mystery of God to them, so as to make the Divinity shine forth in them: Whereas the most heightened reason, of the Accutest Sons of Adam, can

discern nothing but Foolishness in the deep Mysteries of Godliness, v. 14. And indeed were it not the Testimony of that Blessed Spirit to a Believers Heart, that the Books of the *Old* and *New Testament* are the *Lords Written Word*, that they have their Original from the Lord himself, then the Foundation of Believers Faith were not a *Divine Authority*, neither could a Believer say, in believing any truth contained in those Books, that he knew whom he hath Believed, with a Relation to God himself.

II. When that ever Blessed Spirit doth reveal to any Believing Soul, the *Written Word* to be the *Written Word* of God, then the proper light of the *Written Word* it self, shines forth so gloriously; as it discovers it self also to be the *Lords Word*. That is to say, the matter of the *Lords Written Word*, appears then to be so Transcendent, so far surpassing the Capacities of weak men; yea the quality of the *Word* appears to be so Holy, so Pure and Undeiled, so contrary to the *Powers of Hell*, and the *Kingdom of the Devil*, and so contrary to the Tyranny and Domination that mans Corrupt Affections naturally desire to bear over him; yea the quality of the *Word* appears to be so Unspeakably, Unconceivably excellent, that the soul sees infinite reason even in the *Word* it self, to perswade it that it is the *Lords Word*: Yea the manner of the *Written Word*, speaking the very Language it speaks, favours so much of Heaven, that it appears to the Believing soul to be so Cloathed with Power, and Irresistable Authority, it appears to have such properties of God himself, peculiar unto God, Soul-Searching, Heart-Dividing, Properties finding out the Secrets of the Heart, that then the Believing soul

is Compassed about with Reason, Cloathed in with Reason, that appears shining from the *Word* it self, that satisfys the Believing Soul, that it is the *Word* of the Almighty Majesty of Heaven: Divinity is then every way Ingraven upon the *Written Word* in the Believer: So that as the spirit in its casting the Pretious Heavenly Light into the Beliving soul, did Write his own name upon those Beams of light, and made them appear to the soul to be from the spirit; So likewise in the souls discerning the light also to proceed from the Lords *Written Word*, there is the name of God Written upon those Beams of light also, that the soul knows as well as believes them to proceed from God himself, seeing they shine forth from that *Word* of his that the soul believes with Confidence, yea so Satisfyingly, and so knowingly to his full contentment, it is the *Word* of the Blessed Majesty of Heaven. Would you know you that are Confident this day, that a light did shine into your souls to satisfy you concerning your union with Jesus Christ, whether this union be from God or no? Would you be assured as well to knowledge as to faith, that you are not deluded? Then see whether that light that shined into your Souls have shined from the Lords written word. Yet let me add a caution in this, least I might possibly shake some Soul, into whose heart some beams of light from the Spirit hath really descended, to discover to the Soul his union with Christ; though the light that doth shine into every Soul which truly proceeds from God, to discover to the Soul its union with Christ, doth and ought to shine forth from the Lords written word; yet I dare not affirm, that whenever the spirit of light

doth discover to a Soul its union with Jesus Christ clearly, both to faith and sense, that then the Spirit fastens some particular portions of the Lords word by name, from such a Chapter and verse, from whence the Spirit doth make that light shine forth into that believing Soul; certainly the spirit of Jesus Christ may send down precious beams of divine light into a dark Soul, to discover to the Soul satisfyingly its union with the Lord Jesus, both to faith and sense, when such a particular sentence that is written in such a Book, in such a Chapter, in such a Verse, is not brought to the Souls memory: But there may be an extract of the quintessence, that is, of the prime light, the most glorious light of many places of Scripture that concur together in one, to testify the same truth to the Soul: there may be an extract made by the Spirit of Christ, of the grand truth that the Gospel reveals to faith, and of the truth of the Souls believing act that the spirit reveals unto the Souls sense from many places of Scripture, so as the light that the spirit causeth to shine into the Soul, is still from the written word, and the soul discerns it to his own satisfaction, while the glory of the light actually remains, that it doth shine from the precious written word, though it may be the soul could not at that time be able to produce such and such particular sentences, from such a Chapter and such a Verse: though I dare not but say also, but as the soul receiving that certain evidence, doth discern that that sweet light that shines into his soul, shines from the written word; so likewise upon recollecting of himself, and

and upon serious deliberation with himself, he might be able to produce such portions of the Lords word, as would sufficiently testifie to the truth of what the spirit of Jesus Christ had so revealed to his soul from the word: yet observe this, that the soul must then so deliberate, and so consult with his heart about the matter, while the heavenly lustre, and commanding power of those evidencing beams of light remain shining into his soul: for in case the soul be bereaved again upon any occasion of the lustre and glory of those precious beams of light, the soul may so far forget the very sentences that the spirit of Jesus Christ did then dictate to it, that the soul through the darkness and obscurity that passes upon him immediately again, may for the present be incapable of discerning in the written word of God what his soul clearly discerned in the same word formerly, that the soul may (in case the spirit of light should absent it self long) perchance begin to draw some sad conclusion, that the evidence that the Soul received was not a light shining from the Lords word, but some delusion from the Devil, transforming himself into Angelical Glory. This is the second reason whence a soul may prove, that the beam of light received is from God when the soul discerns it to shine from the written word.

The second sort of demonstrations whereby a soul may prove to himself his union with Jesus Christ, must be a demonstration *a posteriori*: A Demonstration taken from the effects, that those beams of light that shine into the soul, discovering to a soul its union with Jesus Christ, do

beget in the Soul. Now all the effects that any thing that proceeds from God begets in believing Souls, are but the accomplishment of the Lords eternal intent: they are but the production of the Lords precious thoughts of love towards those believing Souls, *from before the foundations of the world were laid.* So that whatever is communicated to any believing Soul, if it doth demonstrate it self to proceed from God, by its effects that it begets in him, it must then conduce in some degree to the effecting of the Lords precious eternal will towards that believing Soul. Now those eternal intents of God towards believing Souls, they may be reduced to three Heads according as the Spirit of truth sums them in, *1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.* *All are yours, whether Paul or Apollo, or Cephas, or the World, or Life or Death, or things present, or things to come.* That is Heaven and Earth; all are yours, that is destined unto your good, to accomplish your Salvation. *And ye are Christs,* that is, ye believing Souls are destined to accomplish the glory of Jesus Christ. *And Christ is Gods,* that is Christ himself considered mystically as the Mediator, is appointed for the manifestation of the Fathers glory, for the exaltation of him in the hearts of Saints and Angels, and before the eyes of all the world, so as all may admire him and adore him,

There are three intents and precious ends of the Lord from Eternity towards those believing Souls.

First There is the accomplishment of the glory of those believing Souls

Secondly

Secondly, The perfecting of Christs supernatural glory as he is Mediator.

And Thirdly, The perfect manifestation of the Fathers glory through both these. And therefore seeing these three are those prime and principal ends, the very ultimate end of God, the very sum and compendium of all those precious thoughts that wrought in the blessed Majesty of Heaven, *before the foundations of the world were laid*; thence whatsoever proceeds from God into a believing soul must in some degree or other tend towards the accomplishment of one of those ends. So that it must demonstrate it self to proceed from God by one of those three effects, if it any way can be proved by its effects to proceed from God himself. Only by the way you must take this distinction for prevention of mistakes: the dealings of God towards the Saints, do either ^{tend} mediately to the exaltation of the Saints, and the exaltation of Christ, and the manifestation of the Fathers glory, or else they tend immediately. The Lords promissive will, or the Lords sufferance of a Believer to sin, doth not immediately manifest any of these, yet mediately it doth perfect all: that when the Lord doth suffer the soul to slide and fall, yet then through the mighty Power of his love to the believing soul in Christ, he doth send down the spirit of Jesus Christ, so to work in that believing soul, that those very falls and slips, and backslidings of that believing soul, shall produce more watchfulness over his own ways, more charity towards others, more abominations of those cursed dispositions in his own heart, more aba-

ed thoughts of himself, as he is in himself, more distrustful of himself and his own heart being less confident in himself, and in the strength of the power of holiness as yet communicated to him. And thus those very falls or slips of that believing soul, shall tend in their last end, to make the soul partaker of more holiness, causing the soul to hang more intire, with a more precious constant dependance upon the Lord Jesus, for the constant influences of the sanctified spirit, and so shall exalt the name of God more in that heart, and so shall cause the soul to grow more into a conformity to that mystical Head of his the Lord Jesus; and so through that conformity to his Head, and that mystical glory of Christ, the glory of the Father shall be exalted. Thus likewise you must consider again, that the communication of God himself unto believing souls are secret, invisible and insensible; and also they are visible and sensible: Now those communications of God himself unto the believing soul that are visible and sensible: those do commonly immediately tend to the accomplishment of the believing souls glory, that is, to the perfection of the likeness of Jesus Christ in the soul, and so consequently it tends also to the perfecting of Christs mystical glory, and to the manifestation of the Fathers glory. But those communications of God unto a believing soul that are invisible, secret and insensible; those commonly do tend only mediately to the accomplishment of those fore named blessed ends. So that hence also
you

you may collect, that whenever any communication of God unto a believing soul, doth demonstrate it self to come from God, when it is sensible communication, then it doth immediately tend to the accomplishment of these three ends. This then being considered, and it being apparent, that all the dealings of God with believing souls are for the accomplishment of those his three blessed intendments from before the foundation of the world was laid, then it must be through discernment of one of those three intendments of God effected in the soul, that the believing soul must prove, that such a beam of light as discovers to him his union with Christ, did proceed from God himself.

Now we shall begin with the highest, and so proceed to the lowest. *All are yours, and ye are Christs, and Christ is Gods*, that is for God. And from thence we may conclude, that the prime and principal reason taken from the effects of a souls union with Christ, (where by it may be proved, that souls evidence proceeds from God) is this, that the beam of heavenly light that shines into the soul, to discover its union with the Lord Jesus, doth exalt and magnifie the name of God in the hearts. Gods exaltation of himself in the Believers heart, was the great design of God from all eternity: it was as it were the Alpha and Omega, (as I may so speak) the very beginning and end of the Lords intention; only his intention reached further, to exalt himself through believing souls before all other. Therefore then may the soul prove infallibly the light that discovered to his soul his union with Christ to proceed from God himself

self when it effects the prime intendment of God from eternity to the believing Soul; when it erects a higher Throne ^{for} ~~from~~ the Majesty of Heaven in its heart, when it fills the heart with higher, lower, more zealous acclamations of praise, and honour, and glory, and worship to be given for ever to yonder God; that the light carries the stamp and impression of Heaven upon it, when it begins the work of Heaven in a believing way here: then it is an earnest of Heaven, when it implies the Soul in the work that it is destined to from Eternity, *Pro.* 19. 6 God hath made all things for himself, that is, for the manifestation of his own transcendent glory, so for the magnifying of his ever blessed name. Now when the light that discovers to the soul its union, do thus effect Gods general, his ultimate end in the believing Soul, the Soul may certainly conclude, this beam of light did descend down from the Father of Lights. Now there are four or five acts in the believing Soul, wherein it exalts the name of God.

1. Then the Soul exalts the name of God when it is filled with ~~such~~ sensible apprehensions of such transcendent brightness of glory shining forth from God, as the Soul is utterly unable to conceive of, or apprehend. Now this first act of that believing Soul, to exalt God in his heart, is the certain and infallible effect of every beam of light that proceeds from God, to discover to his Soul his union with the Lord Jesus: Indeed every act of the Lords mercy and goodness towards believing Souls, is a Precious, Christal Glass, wherein believing Souls do see an incomprehensibleness of the beauty, glory, and unspeakable perfection of God; and therefore

therefore much more unconceivable glory do the believing Soul apprehend, in such an high act of the Lords mercy and love, as is the discovery of his precious eternal love to the believing Soul through Christ. This you shall see apparent in *David*, upon the Lords discovering of his promises made unto his Soul in Christ, and made unto his House also, in 2 *Sam.* 7. 18, 19, 20, 21. Then went King *David* in and sat before the Lord: (then) that is after the Prophet had declared the precious promise to his Soul in Christ; and he said, *who am I O Lord God, and what is my House, that thou hast brought me hitherto? Thou art Great O Lord God, there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee,* ver. 22. Mark what sensible, high apprehensions of a transcendent glory in God dwelt in *David's* heart, upon the discovery of such precious promises made to him and his House; likewise upon a smaller mercy comparatively (though indeed typifying the same mercy) upon the deliverance of the *Israelites* from the hands of *Pharaoh*, and drowning their cruel Task-masters in the Red Sea; the hearts of the Saints were filled with high apprehensions of the glory of God, *Exod.* 15. 11, *Who is like unto thee O Lord,* (yea, they repeat their admiration twice, as if they could not admire him enough (*who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?*) you may behold the same workings of the believing heart, 1. *John.* 3. 1. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God.* There are three or four special beams of the glory of Heaven, that a Believer apprehends as unspeakable, unconceivable, incomprehensible, when a beam of

of light shines from God to discover to the Soul its union with Christ

1. There is then such a glorious brightness of the presence of God appears to the believing Soul, as it stands amazed to behold it. When the Lord lets such a beam of light shine into the dark Soul, that it sees the Lords will is indeed to be one with him in Christ; yea, that his Soul is already lodged in that precious bosom of the love of the Lord Jesus, then the Soul beholds such an unspeakable preciousness in the Majesty of Heaven, that he waited upon such an unbeliever, such a crooked opposite wretch so long, that the Soul sets down silently to admire, and is swallowed to the depth in admiration.

2. There is a Soul-amazing brightness appears in the Souls eye in the independance of the Lords love. When that Bright Beam of light shines from Heaven, to discover to the Soul its union with the Lord Jesus, the Soul seeth that there was nothing that moved the heart of God to have thoughts of love towards him, nothing that enclined his blessed will to admit him into union with Jesus Christ, but only his precious disposition, only his eternal thoughts of kindness, that old loving kindness of his from Eternity; then the Soul says as David, in 1 Sam. 7. 21. *for thy words sake, and according to thy own heart hast thou done all these great things, to make thy Servant know them*; then the believing Soul says, though my wretched unbelieving heart could not trust thee, yet for thy words sake thou hast fulfilled it, according to thine own heart thou hast done it: O Lord, what could thy purest eye behold in this forlorn Soul of mine

mine? What could have moved the Lord thinks the Soul but his own blessed will, to chuse such an useles, such an unserviceable, such an unprofitable, such a barren, such a foolish; yea, such a cross hearted wretch as I?

3. The glorious irresistible power of the Lords eternal love in Christ to the loveless Soul shineth gloriously. When once the light shineth from Heaven, that discovered to the believing Soul his union with Christ; how many cursed contradictions thinks a believing Soul, did the love of Christ suffer from my Soul? How often did my vile believing heart give the Majesty of Heaven the lye? How many years did I sleight this? I stopped my Ears, I hearkned to none of his blessed tenders, yet then he bored mine Ear, and constrained me to hear: O think the Soul what a froward, perverse hearted Wretch have I been to this dear God of mine. Certainly thinks the Soul, if rebellion, if enmity, if the working of a Devils heart could have opposed it, it had been turned away from me.

Fourthly, The orient brightness of the Lords infallible truth shines before the Soul. These Beams of the Lords glory shines in a peculiar manner before the Souls Eye; but there are multitudes of the *rayes* of the Majesty of Heaven, that also with these, shine in the same moment into the same Soul, when a light proceeds from God to discover to a Soul its union; then the wisdom of the Lord in contriving the design of Redemption by Christ appears, then do the very beauty of justice it self appear, in the Lords contriving the Redemption of loveless Souls in such a way, wherein justice and mercy

mercy might meet together and kiss each other; so that indeed a light shines from Heaven that incompasseth the Soul round about, that the Soul stands amazed and astonished, gazing upon those beams of glory, that appear shining forth from the Majesty of Heaven into his Soul.

II. A second act of a believing Soul wherein the name of God is exalted in the Soul, is a sensible apprehension; and estimation of the Lord to be infinitely worthy to receive all perfection of glory, and honour, and praise for ever. Now this precious God sanctifying act, is also the infallible necessary effect of such a precious beam of light, as doth truly shine from the Father of Lights into any Soul, to discover his union with the Lord Jesus. This was effected in *David's* heart upon the Prophets discovering of the Promises made in Jesus to him, in 2. Sam. 7. 26. *Let thy name be magnified for ever, saying the Lord of Hosts is the God over Israel;* yea this act is infallibly produced in a believing Soul by every visible motion of the Lords mercy or love towards the Soul. So you may observe in *Exod. 15. 20.* *Miriam* cried to the rest of the Daughters of *Judah*; *sing ye to the Lord for he hath triumphed gloriously.* So *Rev. 4. 10 11.* *The four and twenty Elders* fell down that sat before him upon the Throne; *saying thou art worthy O Lord to receive glory and honour and power.*

Now there are two things that follow upon the Souls vision of his union with the Lord Jesus, by the light of the Spirit of Christ that do necessarily produce this apprehension, or estimation in the believing Soul.

I. Upon the Souls discovery of its union with the Lord

Lord Jesus; there are lively enlarged actings of love produced in the Soul. Every renewed vision of love inflames the Believers heart with love again correspondently: Now from those quickned and enlarged actings of love, do arise necessarily high estimations, and glorious conceptions of the Majesty of God, that thence the Soul apprehends him infinitely *of* worthy to receive honour and glory for ever.

2. Upon the Souls discerning his union with the Lord Jesus, ~~there follows an apprehension of the souls union with the Lord Jesus;~~ there follows an apprehension of the Souls owing all that he is and enjoys unto God by way of retribution. Now from a Souls apprehension that he owes more then he is or have unto God, he conceives him infinitely worthy to receive honour and glory, for ever and ever from all the creation: he himself can never render glory sufficient, therefore he esteems it to be but equal, that the whole Creation should joyn together to exalt this blessed Majesty.

III. The third act in a believing Soul wherein the name of God is exalted, is a sensible apprehension of the dispicableness, worthlessness and nothingness of the Soul it self, and all that the circumference of the earth affords, without God and in comparison of God. Now this God-exalting act in the believing Soul, is also the necessary effect of such a precious beam of light shining from the Father of Lights to discover to a Soul its union with Christ: then indeed is the Soul a worm and no man, then is he empty and poor, yea absolutely nothing without communion with that his God; yea then is all the Creation but meer shadows, flying vanities without that God in Christ, then do the quintessence of all the beauty of the whole Creation
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(if it could be abstracted) appear but as the drop of the bucket, as the dust of the ballance, yea as vanity without that God in Christ. Thus in *Psal.* 8. 4. upon the Psalmists apprehension of the infinite glory of God, he immediately ^{breaks} ~~erects~~ out into admiration of the nothingness of man, Lord what is man?

IV. The fourth act of the believing Soul wherein the name of God is exalted, is the Souls actual prostration or subjections of all its powers and possibilities at the foot of the Lords glorious Majesty. Now this precious God-sanctifying act in the believing Soul is the necessary infallible effect of a true beam of light shining from the father of lights into the believing soul to discover its union with the Lord Jesus. Indeed there is a necessity of such a discovery to a believing Soul of its union with Jesus Christ preceeding the sweetest act of subjection of himself wholly at the foot of God.

1. In regard then when such a light shines into the soul to discover its union with Christ, the soul apprehends an infinite disproportion between that which he owes to God and his ability and capacity to pay to him, He apprehends Men and Angels are never sufficient to render to the Lord according to his benefits bestowed upon his loveless soul.

2 It appears to that soul (while there is such a discovery of that his union with Christ) to be an infinite injury to the Majesty of Heaven, that a thought of his heart should not be subject to his blessed will. The hearts faith within it self, so sweetly hath the Lord passed over himself and all his fulness, to this empty loveless soul of mine, that it were such an accursed requital as might incense the Lord to be incomplacable should my heart be withheld from giving one subjection to him, that thence the soul is constrained by an irresistible power

power, by ineffable bands of love, to yield all precious subjection to the blessed will of God.

V. The fifth and last act, that must concur together with all the Four former to the exaltation of the Name of God, is the souls taking up a full acquiescence, or rest and contentment in God alone. It is an infinite unspeakable injury to the Majesty of Heaven, that one desire, one inclination in the heart, should be a Vagrant to wander hither and thither to seek for its satisfaction out of God. Now this precious God-exalting act in the believing soul, is necessarily, certainly, and infallibly produced, by a true beam of light shining from Heaven into any believing soul, to discover its union with the Lord Jesus. Thus you shall observe it was in *David*, *Psal. 63. 3, 4, 5. Thy loving kindness is better than life; My Soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.* It should be contentment enough for him to enjoy his love only. Thus these Five acts which concur together to the exalting of the Lords blessed Name, are all the necessary and certain effects of a true beam of light shining from Heaven into the believing soul, to discover to it its union with the Lord Jesus. So that whatever Soul is partaker of such a blessed beam of the light of Heaven, as do truly discover from God to him his union with the Lord Jesus, he hath these pretious God-exalting acts necessarily produced in his soul, whereby that light that shines into his Soul discovers it self to have its original from God.

There is a second branch of this great end of God from eternity, from whence a Soul that con-

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ceives he hath received satisfying evidences of his union with Christ, may gather another evidence of his union, and that is the exaltation of God through those believing souls. This is that you read of, *Eph. 1. 4, 5. He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the World, that we should be holy, having predestinated us unto the adoption of Children, through Jesus Christ to himself, to the praise of the glory of his grace*: That is, to the end that his glorious love in Jesus Christ, might be made manifest through us, to give praise to the Lord, to declare the excellency of God, to publish and tell abroad the glory of God. Now the very end unto which God predestinated believing Souls, was to the glory of his love, to the end they should be like Silver Trumpets, to sound aloud and proclaim his glory. So that then this being the great end of God from eternity, in his love to believing souls, that they might be like so many Golden Pillars, whereupon the Lord might write the glorious excellency of his love in great Characters, that others might read it, thence of necessity, this must be the effect and consequence in some degree, of the Lords Communications of love unto believing souls, all the workings of his love necessarily tending in order to their ultimate end. So that then a second reason, from whence the Soul may demonstrate to himself, that the light that himself hath received, to discover to him his union with Jesus Christ is really from God is this, that the precious light that shined into his dark soul to reveal to him his union with Christ, did necessarily and certainly effect the exaltation of God through him.

Now

Now that exaltation of God consists only in this, in the Souls declaring or manifesting, the brightness and perfection of those excellencies to be in God, that God hath revealed to be in him, in his pretious word. But herein we must descend down into particulars.

First, God is exalted through the Soul when the brightness, the lustre, the perfection that the Lord discovers in that his love in Christ to unlovely sinners is manifested through the believing soul; and made conspicuous before others by the believing soul. Thence it is you shall observe in *Psal. 50. 23.* saith God, *who so offereth praise glorifieth me*: Now the offering praise is nothing else taken strictly, but a sincere, humble declaration of the glorious workings of the Lords love and mercy to poor despicable worms; it is but a publishing the glorious works of God, and speaking of the excellency and perfection of God. Thence in *Isa. 43. 7.* The Sons and Daughters of God are said to be Created for the Lords glory, which they accomplish by shewing forth his praise, *v. 21.* It is by making manifest what the excellencies of God in himself are. Now then God is exalted in a believing soul, when the excellency and glory of the Lords love in Christ revealed to Sinners, is made manifest through the Soul. This is done Three ways.

1. When the Soul doth give a real practical testimony to the fulness and perfection of that love of God in Christ to an unlovely Sinner. Now this the believing soul doth practically declare in Four or Five things.

First, By rejoycing fully and gloriously in that love. When the Heart can rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory, in that love of God that is in Christ, then is the blessed Name of God exalted through the soul, in regard the soul then declares practically, and gives a real testimony to other believing souls, and to the World too, that the blessed God of Heaven is true, that his love is according to what he declared in his blessed word, that his love to unlovely sinners contains all kind of happiness, contentment, glory and excellency that is desirable by a believing soul, so far as is suitable for him.

Secondly, When the Soul can despise and disregard all kind of difficulty whatsoever, for the enjoyment of the sweet fruit and working of that love of God that is in Christ. Thence it is that Martyrdom for the Name of Christ is accounted such an high honouring of Jesus Christ, and that the Lord testifies such respect to those that do suffer for his Name, in regard by those their sufferings wherein they seem to slight their Estates, their outward Liberty, their Lives for the sake of Christ; they declare there is all fulness of contentment in him, that there is happiness enough for them, that all outward contentments, the confluence of all the happiness that the Earth doth afford, is not to be compared to the enjoyment of the love of God in Christ, and to the pretious manifestation, and sweetest operation of it.

Thirdly, When the Soul sends forth the whole strength of his soul in his pursuit of the enjoyment of the sweetest discovery of that love,

love, and the most pretious operations of it into, and upon his soul.

Fourthly, When there is a deadness in the Heart towards all things else, in comparision of the love of God that is in Christ.

Fifthly, When the soul can take its fulness of contentment in that love, in the absence of all things else. When a soul can actually drink such full drafts of the love of God that is in Christ; that is to say, promise himself such happiness contentment, unspeakable perfection of glory, in the enjoyment of that love, that the Heart says practically it is enough; though the Heavens should withdraw their light, and the Earth all her advantages that ever she can afford, seeing there is the love of my God in Christ that I shall ~~actual~~ ^{everlasting} enjoy.

Now further we are to shew you, that this manifestation, or declaration practically by the believer, that all perfection and glory is eminently contained in God in Christ to unlovely sinners, is the necessary, certain, infallible effect of a beam of light shining from God to a believing soul, to discover its union with the Lord Jesus. So that whenever any beam of light is cast down from Heaven into the dark soul of any believer, to manifest certainly its union with the Lord Jesus, then certainly also that ever blessed Name of God is exalted through the believing ^{soul} in that that pretious beam of light doth necessarily cause that believer to manifest and declare practically, the fulness of the Lords love in Christ, that there is all perfection, excellency, and glory, that can possibly be suitable for the believing soul, con-

tained in that love; eminently, transcendently, infallibly: as will appear further by opening every particular way and means, how the believing soul doth practically manifest that there is fulness in the Lords love in Christ, to such unlovely sinners as the Lord declares. As,

I. The kind of fulness of joy and rejoycing, which is a prime and principal means how the name of God is exalted by a believing soul, is the necessary and infallible effect of a beam of light shining from Heaven into a soul to discover its union with the Lord Jesus. That you may observe from 1 Pet. 1. 8. *whom having not seen ye love, in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* [With joy unspeakable.] Joy, that cannot be uttered either by the Tongue of men or Angels; Joy it is full of glory; that is, full of excellency and sweetness, delight and contentment: Their believing produced this effect, an unspeakable joy in their Hearts; Then much more a beam of light from the spirit of light, discovering unto faith the Lords blessed will to admit the soul into union with Christ, and thereby powerfully enabling the believing soul to believe afresh, and also a beam of light from the blessed spirit, manifesting the souls believing act unto the soul it self (and so discovering both unto faith and sense such unspeakable matter of joy and rejoycing) much more must this fill the believing soul with *joy unspeakable and full of glory.* According to that in Eph. 5. 22, *The fruit of the Spirit is peace and joy.* Mark it, the proper effect of the spirit of Jesus Christ dwelling in the be-

believing soul is joy; then certainly that joy that possesses a believing soul, must needs be exceedingly eminently raised to a high strain, to a superlative degree, when the spirit of Jesus Christ shall dwell so plentifully as it doth, when it thus bears testimony to faith, and testimony to sense, of the Souls union with Jesus Christ. Yea, such is the nature, and power, and vertue of a beam of light sent down from God, to discover to a soul his union with Christ, that it cannot but infallibly produce such a superlative degree of joy and rejoycing in that love of God that is in Christ.

I. In regard through that beam of light from the spirit, ~~and~~ discovering to the Soul its union the enlarged, longing, restless breathings of that believing soul, are in some measure accomplished. Now *Solomon* tells us, *Prov. 13. 12.* that the accomplishment of *the desire is a tree of life*: There is such infinite sweetness, contentment and satisfaction in the souls attaining his desires, that from thence the soul seems to gather Apples of life from a Tree of life.

II. In regard that light gives the believing soul a pretious taste of his mutual Communion with his God through Christ. Every believing act doth occasion some Communion to be between God and the believing soul, but much more in that believing act, that is heightened by the power of the spirit of Christ to a certainty: Then there are large degrees of life and holiness, communicated from God to the believing soul, and a kind of full communication of all the powers and possibilities of the believing soul

to God again: then God delights himself in the believing soul sweetly, and the soul reciprocally delights himself in God. Now the very taste of the communion, which is the earnest of the souls full inheritance (which is eternal communion with God in Christ) that cannot but fill the believing soul with joy and peace.

III. In regard that light occasions the believing soul to enjoy all that Heaven it self can afford through hope. It causes the soul to sit together with Christ by hope, *Eph. 2. 6*. It causeth the soul to discern certainly through believing the Lord Jesus as his blessed head, to be gone before as an Harbinger to prepare a place for him, that the soul by hope sits there already, and is saved already.

4. That light draws out the actings of faith in such certainty, that all the glory of Heaven it self is presented also to the believing soul. Faith, saith the Apostle in *Heb. 11. 1*. *Is the evidence of things not seen*; That is, it is such a disposition as by its pretious working, gives things not seen an evident certainty unto the believing soul: yea, it is the substance of things hoped for: The word in the original is very emphatical, it is *ὑπόστασις*. It is that which gives a substantial being to things hoped for; a being already, that the soul not only enjoys all that Heaven affords by hope, but through the certainty of the actings of faith (raised by the power of the Spirits working to discover to the soul its union with Christ) the soul enjoys all that Heaven affords at present: So that needs must a superlative degree of joy possess the believing soul, which he in a manner

ner sits in Heaven, as enjoying the sweetest communion of the Lords love, as gazing upon that precious face of God in Christ, and blessing himself also in the contemplation of it to all eternity.

II. The second means by which the believing soul practically declares, that there is all perfection and glory contained in the love of the Lord in Christ to unlovely sinners, whereby the name of God is exalted through him, is the souls despising and disregarding all difficulties for the enjoyment of that love of God in Christ. That is also the necessary, the infallible effect of a beam of light proceeding from the spirit of light, to discover to a soul his union with Christ. This you may observe, *Rom. 8. 34, 35*. There you find the assuring act of faith concerning the souls union with Christ; *who is he that condemneth, it is Christ that died?* and *ver. 37*. You shall find the Apostle triumphing over all kind of difficulties, trampling under foot *persecution, necessity, famine, nakedness, peril and sword*; and professing, *we are more than Conquerors* over all, to overcome them, so as they are no impediment or hindrance to us, but we are able to be [*more than Conquerors*] to make advantage even of those difficulties, whereby we shall the more closely pursue after Jesus Christ. Yea, such is the power of that light that discovers to the soul its union with Christ, that it doth necessarily cause the soul thus to despise all difficulties for the enjoyment of the love of God in Christ.

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1. In regard that light enobles and raises the spirit, of every one to whom the spirit of light communicates it. Heirs views of their great Possessions, greatens their Spirits: likewise do the believing souls vision of those glorious things prepared for them, heighten and elevate their Spirits above all things below.

2. In regard the pretious light from the spirit of light, doth present such unparallel, such incomprehensible glory to the believing souls view, that all things appear as nothing in comparison of *that glory that is revealed*. Now thence it cannot be but difficulties must appear as nothing upon the sight of such glory; hence *Moses, Heb. 11. 26.* disregarded *Pharoahs* wrath, because he saw God that was invisible; and the Apostle calls the afflictions they met with *light afflictions*, because they looked at *things that were not seen*, 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18.

3. In regard it doth necessarily produce enlarged, enlivening actings of love. Every believing act produces a proportionable act of love; Therefore certainly that high noble act of faith, that act of certainty that is drawu forth by the spirit of light at such a time, doth produce enlarged acts of love, it proportionably doth send out the strength of the soul in love towards God in Christ, as well as the strength of the soul goeth out in believing.

3. A third means whereby the soul practically declares that there is a fulness of the Lords love whereby the Lord is exalted in the soul, is the souls pursuance with his utmost strength, the enjoyment of the clearest visions of that love, and the

the sweetest freedom of the actings and workings of that love into, and towards the soul. Now this also is the necessary effect of a beam of light coming down from Heaven, to evidence or reveal to a soul his union with Christ. You shall observe in 2 Cor. 5. 1, 2, 4. That Souls certainty of their union with Christ, which was the effect of the spirit of light shining into their hearts, it did produce such groaning and longing with the strength of their Souls, ^{after} the sweetest and clearest enjoyment of the fulness of that love: We know saith he (there is the act of certainty) *that if our earthly House of this Tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens: Mark, for this we groan earnestly, desiring to be cloathed upon with our House which is from Heaven: So ver. 4. we groan, being burdened, and so ver. 1. they were willing to absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord:* The strength of their Souls so pursued after the fullest, the clearest enjoyment of that love, that they desired to breath out their lives, to be dissolved, that they might have the clearest vision of that love of God in Christ, and the sweetest enjoyment of it. Neither can it possibly be otherwise, considering,

1. In that things appear in their despicable nothingness, by such a beam of light shining from the blessed Spirit into a believing Soul, to discover its union. Thence it is that the strength of the soul pursues after the enjoyment of the love of God in Christ only, seeing no other object appears worthy to be desired in comparison to the enjoyment of the love of God in Christ.

2. In

2. In regard the love of God in Christ, discovered by that light, appears in such a manner as takes up the whole intention of the believing Soul, and implies every faculty of it. Such a mystery appears in that fulness of the love of God in Christ to unlovely sinners, as takes up all the strength of the Souls capacity to view and meditate upon ; yea, it at last appears to be a depth never to be fathomed, and so drowns the understanding in a depth of admiration ; yea, that fulness of the Lords love appears so to comprehend all beauties, and glories, and all things desirable, as it is the object of every desire, of every motion, or reaching forth of the Spirit : So that thence it takes up all the intentions of all the faculties of the Soul.

IV. A Fourth means whereby believing Souls do declare the Lords love to be according as the Lord reveals, whereby the Name of God is exalted in the Soul, is the deadness of the Heart to every thing in comparison to that love of the Lord in Christ. Now even this crucifying of the Heart to all things else in comparison of that love, is the infallible effect also of such a beam of light from the Spirit of God to reveal to the Soul its union. That 2 Cor. 5. 8. is enough to manifest it. Their certainty of their acceptance with God, produced a willingness in them even to be absent from the body it self, a readiness in their Hearts to part with every thing for the enjoyment of that love, it choaked and quenched all desires of earthly objects of beauty or excellency, so as their Spirits were so

so dead, so void of desire, so empty of all thirstings and endeavours after earthly objects, as they rather ~~desire~~ ^{desire} to be dissolved, to be dead indeed that they might have the full benefit of their union, even the full presence of God in Christ. And certainly it cannot be, but such a light from the Lord to discover to the Soul its union with Christ, must necessarily thus Crucifie the Heart to all things, so as to be alive to God in Christ only, both in regard the Soul apprehends the doleful, sinful miscarriages of his Heart about every of those things (what sad fraies they are to his Spirit) and also he beholds the emptiness and nothingness, by comparing things temporal, with things eternal; and he beholds a full object of all contentment, wherein all the desires of his Soul may be conceived together in one, wherein is all happiness that his Spirit can breath after, and he may bless himself in the full enjoyment of it.

V. The Fifth means whereby the Soul experimentally manifests the fulness of the Lords love, so as the name of God is exalted through him, is the fulness of contentment that the Soul takes in the enjoyment of the love of God in Christ only, in the absence of all things else. Now even this also is produced by such a light evidencing to the Soul his union with the Lord Jesus; yea, so powerful is this contentment of the Heart in the love of God in Christ in the absence of all things else, effected by such a light of Heaven, discovering

covering to the Soul his union with Christ, that the Soul while the beauty and lustre of that light remains, takes not only its full contentment, but even more than contentment, even glorying in his God in Christ, in the want of all things. That you may see, *Rom. 5. 1, 2. Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; and not only so, but we glory in tribulation also: We glory,* that is, we make our boast of God, we bless our selves in him, we are able to set the love of God in opposition to all things else, and even in tribulations themselves to triumph and glory, to conceive our selves so filled with excellence, that we even boast our selves of him. So that thus all those precious acts of a believing soul, whereby he declares and manifests the fulness of the Lords love in Christ to unlovely sinners (so as the Name of God is exalted through the Soul by that means) all those acts are necessarily and infallibly produced by the power of that light from Heaven, that doth discover to any Soul his union with the Lord Jesus. And so it appears, that this may be a second reason from whence a believing Soul may prove, that the evidence of his union with the Lord Jesus received, is really from God, because it causeth the Name of God to be exalted through him. Thus we have opened the first way of the Souls manifestation of that glorious love to be in God, that God hath revealed to be in himself, that is, by the Souls manifesting that unspeakable fulness to be in the love of God in Christ

to despicable sinners, that all perfections and glorious excellencies whatever that could be suitable to a Soul is compleatly contained in it.

2. Secondly, A Soul doth manifest that glorious love to be in God, which God hath revealed to be in himself unto despicable Sinners; By discovering or manifesting such an absolute perfection to be in that love of God in Christ, to unlovely Sinners, as nothing can prevent and hinder, or turn away that love. When a Soul shall declare, that the infinite multitudes of wickedness, that his Soul heaped up before his knowledge of God in Christ, and all the infirmities and imperfections that abound in his Soul now, yet are no hindrance to the working of the Lords love in Christ to his unlovely Soul; yea, when the Soul shall triumph against imperfections as *Paul* did against tribulation, and say apparently, who shall separate this loathsome Soul of mine, from that pretious love of God that is in Christ Jesus? Shall my deadness, hardness, vanity, looseness? Shall my stubborn, opposite, backsliding disposition, my hypocritical, false, treacherous disposition, separate this loveless Soul of mine, from the love of God that is in Christ; Nay, in all these infirmities, and imperfections, the love of the Lord in Jesus Christ never ceases its working: Nay, so glorious is the freedom of that love of God in Christ, that it breaks through all such oppositions, as my vilest Heart makes against it; Then is the Name of God exalted in the glory of his love through the Soul. Thus did *Paul* exalt God, when he had been acknowledging, that in him; that is, in his flesh dwelt no good thing, Rom.

7. 8. That not a spark, not a disposition, not an inclination to comply with the Lords blessed will dwelt in him, and declares the mighty operation of the Law of his members (which were the cursed dispositions of his Heart) against the Law of his mind (which was the blessed disposition in his Heart to comply with God) when thus I say he declared that the Law that was in his members was so full of power and might, that it maintained a strong battel against Jesus Christ; yea, that it wounded him, and made him a Slave and Vassal to that cursed disposition, yet then he exalts God by this occasion, breaking out thus, *Rom. 8. 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*: Mark that word *now*: Now seeing the vile, rebellious disposition of my vilest Heart, cannot turn away the workings of the Lords free love; now seeing though my Heart maintain War against the Spirit of Jesus Christ; yea, such War as leads my Soul Captive also, and even enslaves and enthrals, and vassalageth me under the power of sin; though it be thus, yet the love of God in Jesus Christ can never cease it workings. He thus declares to the whole World in a kind of triumphing way, that the freedom of Gods love is so absolute and perfect; that even now, though there be such opposition made against the workings of it, by the vilest crooked Heart, yet there can never be a turning away of that love, never a Sentence of Condemnation drawn out by God against any Soul that accepts that his love in Christ. This manifestation, that there is such an absolute perfection of freedom

dom in the love of God in Christ, that nothing can prevent and turn away that love from any soul that embraceth it, this is manifested three ways, through which the name of God is exalted through the Soul.

1. This is manifested by the souls sensible free acknowledgement of its abhorred vileness and loathsomness, when the Lord tenders his love in Christ to it; yea when the Lord receives his unlovely Soul into the dearest, sweetest embrace of his love. When the soul shall readily and freely declare; nothing but enmity, opposition, contradiction to the blessed God of Heaven, to have been in his vilest heart, when that blessed news came down from Heaven to his hopeless Soul, that the Lord was ready and willing to admit of reconciliation, peace and agreement and love, to be between his soul and himself. This indeed is a high exaltation of the name of God in respect of the glory of that his love that he reveals to be in himself to such unlovely sinners; when thus the soul shall declare to the everlasting honour of God, that true and faithful is his word; he loves upon his own will only, and shews mercy to whom he will, and because he will. And thence you may observe, that it is a high dishonour to the name of the blessed God, for any soul to make any claim to that love of God that is in Jesus Christ, by vertue of any quality or disposition whatever, that is in their own souls, whereby they are differenced as they conceive from other souls, and they have right to claim that love of God in Christ when other souls may not claim it; this is a pollution of the name of God, by its vilifying the absolute perfection of freedom in the love of God

in Christ to unlovely sinners.

2. The manifestation of the glory of the Lords love to the exaltation of God through the soul, is by the souls unwavering, unshaken confidence in the truth and faithfulness of the Lord according to his word, to admit the soul into the sweetest Bosom of his love in Christ, notwithstanding all the loathsomeness and forlornness of the worthless soul. When the soul manifests his confidence in that faithfulness of God in the highest degree, then is the name of God exalted through the soul, when the soul says with *Paul. 2. Tim. 1. 12. I know whom I have trusted*; notwithstanding all this, the wretched and most accursed wickedness of my vilest heart, *I know he is true and faithful*, he will let his love that is, in Jesus, work according as he hath discovered it freely from the disposition of his own will only, notwithstanding all my wickedness. And mark it ~~is~~, this one of the prime reasons, why Jesus Christ in that pattern of all prayer that he hath freely given us (commonly called the Lords Prayer) hath commanded all souls and so believing souls, to pray constantly for forgiveness of their Trespases, for pardon of sin, because through that act performed according to the will of Jesus Christ, the name of God is constantly exalted through the believing soul. I do believe that pleading for pardon of sin by believing souls is much mistaken; some souls darkly and blindly (I had like to have said superstitiously) plead for the use of those very words, *forgive us our trespases*, as though no believing soul could perform his duty without the repetition of those words and other souls from an abhorrency of

of the blindness and darkness of those that thus plead for the use of the bare words, utterly reject that Petition that Jesus Christ hath given us, as a pattern whereby to frame our Petitions, determining it utterly unlawful to make such a Petition, or such a Request; but certainly were the reason of making the request rightly considered, it might give light both to the one and to the other, to give them to conceive aright, how and why a believing soul may pray and beseech the Lord to pardon his Transgressions, though understanding through believing that they are already pardoned. There are two things that must concur together for the making of that request.

The first is a remembering the Lord of his precious promise wherein he offers reconciliation, peace and love in Christ to the sinful despicable soul. There must be in the thoughts of the believing soul making the request aright, an actual apprehension that God hath offered unto his soul reconciliation by Christ, and so remission of all his sins freely by Christ; and questionless there ought to be some declaring of that promise also before the Lord, though sometimes more briefly, sometimes more largely, sometimes in one manner, sometimes in another; yet a remembering the Lord of that his precious word.

Secondly, there must be a sincere desire in the believing soul, that his heart and mind might consent to the truth of the Lords word, as spoken to his particular soul; and consequently a desire to trust to the truth and faithfulness of the Lord to fulfill that his precious word even to his particular soul fully. So that the soul that presents the request

aright, must upon the apprehension of his own most accursed vileness, turn his eye to that sweetest tender of reconciliation and peace to his soul in Christ, saying secretly at least, O Lord thou hast spoken it, that thy will is to remit the sins, to pass by the enmity of every rebellious soul that will accept the reconciliation thou dost tender in Christ, and then the heart must proceed farther, saying O Lord seeing thou hast spoken it, fulfill that thy word to this rebellious sinful soul of mine, my soul desires to trust to thy truth to fulfill it, O let it be fulfilled, let that enmity be removed, and that reconciliation be established between thee and my soul.

3. The third way of the souls manifestation of the perfection of freedom that is in the love of God in Christ to despicable sinners, by which the name of God is exalted through the soul, is by the souls maintaining the same confidence of his in the Lords truth to vouchsafe to be in love with his unlovely soul through Christ, notwithstanding all infirmities, weakness, imperfections and perverse crookedness that his heart shall discern afresh to be in himself. Now when the soul after humble acknowledgement of those cursed dispositions in his corrupt heart, shall still act and manifest that precious confidence, then doth the soul give glory to the Lord in respect of the freedom that is in his love, then doth the soul declare that nothing can turn away, or cause to cease the workings of that infinite free love of God in Christ, then the soul declares that the love of God in Christ was built upon no other foundation but his precious will, and that it was nothing in the soul that was lovely and amiable in the eyes of God

God, that ever inclined the heart of God to fix his love upon the soul. And on the contrary, thence it is that those souls pollute the name of God in their hearts, and before others also, whose confidence shake and waver upon the sight of every new infirmity and imperfection, whose confidence is cast away upon the sight of every new crooked disposition working in their hearts, upon every disposition to deadness, vanity, looseness: by this they veil the absolute perfection of the riches of the freedom of love that is in God through Christ to unlovely sinners, and declare in effect the love of the Lord in Christ to be built upon the holy actings of the soul towards God; yea the soul declares in effect (virtually at least) that the riches of the Lords love that is in Christ, increase and diminish, according to the holiness or unholiness that he discerns in his own heart. Hence the Apostle exhorts believing souls upon the account of Christs intercession, to come boldly to the Throne of Grace, *Heb. 4. 15. 16 That the name of God might be exalted through believing souls*, by holding forth the glorious freedom of that riches of love that is in Christ Jesus. Now we shall shew you that this exaltation of God in this manifestation of the perfection of freedom of his love in Christ to unlovely sinners, is the necessary inseparable, infallible effect of a true beam of light shining from Heaven into any dark heart, to reveal to that soul his union with the Lord Jesus. This must be opened by shewing you those three acts of believing souls, whereby they do thus manifest the glorious freedom of the Lords love to the exaltation of God through them; that these three

acts are necessarily and certainly produced in souls by discerning a beam of light from Heaven to discover to them their union with Jesus Christ

First, That sensible and free acknowledgement of the souls abhorred vileness, even when the tender of the Lords love in Jesus Christ is made to it; yea when the Lord grasps it in the everlasting arm of his love that was in Christ, even this sensible and free acknowledgement of the souls most cursed wickedness, is the necessary effect of a souls receiving a light from Heaven, to evidence its union with the Lord Jesus Christ, this you may see, 1 *Tim.* 1. 14. *Paul* tells us that he was before a *Blasphemer*, and a *Persecutor*, and *injurious*, yet to me the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, not only abundant, having more than a fulness of love, but exceeding abundant, abounding in the most superlative degree, in the most inconceivable manner. So the third and fourth Chapters to the *Romans*, seem to be written for that very purpose in a great measure, to prove nothing but vileness to have been in those souls whom the Lord accepted into the Bosom of his love in Christ. Thus the Apostle endeavours to draw forth free acknowledgments of their abhorred vileness, while he is remembring them of the riches of the Lords love in Christ to them. We shall make it appear in some particulars, that the free sensible acknowledgement of the souls abhorred wickedness, when the Lord tenders his love in Christ, is the necessary effect of receiving a beam of light from Heaven to discover to the soul his union.

1. In regard there is an actual view of the most accursed wretchedness of the soul, by the power of
of

of a beam of light that shines from Heaven to discover to a soul his union with Christ. Any beam of true light that shines into a soul, is but a discovery of the Gospel-message in its clearness, extent and latitude; it is but an opening and expounding clearly and satisfyingly to the souls capacity the message of glad tydings that Christ sent to poor despicable sinners: now that glad tydings, is nothing else but the message of reconciliation to every soul that will accept it, and thence it cannot be but the same light must present to the souls view the sight of his enmity and opposition of heart; it cannot be but at the same moment when the soul apprehends his own reconciliation to God in Christ, he must apprehend his own enmity formerly to God in Christ. Thence it is that in *Ezek.* 36. 31. In the Prophets foretelling the blessed Covenant of Grace, that should be established between God and Souls, he doth also prophecy that those with whom the Covenant of Grace should be established; they shall remember their own evil ways and doings that were not good, and shall loath themselves in their own sight for their iniquities and abominations. Now any beam of precious light from Heaven, thus necessarily presenting to the soul an actual view of its own abhorred vileness, thence it cannot but dispose that believing soul for sensible and free acknowledgement of that unspeakable vileness of his, when the tender of that love came to him.

2. In regard every beam of light enables the soul to comprehend his sinfulness and most accursed wickedness more largely and fully, it causeth him to behold the height and depth, and length

and breath of his own wickedness according to the glory of God apprehended against whom the soul have sinned; so are the souls apprehensions or comprehensions of the height of his own vileness; now the glory of the light never shines so clearly and transparently upon any soul, as it does when such a beam of light comes from the spirit of light and manifestation, to discover the glorious riches of love in Christ to the despicable unlovely soul, admitting the loveless, worthless soul into the nearest union; so that thence there can never be such full comprehensions of his own sinfulness, as there is in the very moment when such a beam of light shines from Heaven upon the soul.

3. In regard the affections are all drawn forth to work in their strength against the souls sinfulness, by such a beam of light shining forth. That manifestation of the riches of the Lords love, begets answerable correspondent workings of love in the soul towards God again: now those workings of love in the soul towards God, draws forth the workings of all the other affections against the souls sinfulness. Love and Hatred works towards their contrary objects in like degree: In the very same measure that the actings of love are drawn out towards God, in the same measure is the hatred of the soul, the loathing and abhorring of the sinful disposition drawn out. This *David* declares, *Psal.* 119. 103. That upon his tasting the sweetness of the Lords words which were the actings of love in the soul of *David* to the word of God, *he hates every false way, ver. 104, and vain thoughts ver. 13.* His love and hatred wrought equally alike towards their object, his love to the Law of God

God made him hate whatever was contrary to it. Now the love of the soul towards God, is drawn out in its superlative degree of acting by that clear discovery from Heaven that Jesus Christ and the Soul are one: and thence likewise all the affections cannot but work in their highest degree against all the sinfulness of the Soul, both hatred of the sinful disposition, sorrow and melting and breaking of heart in remembrance of it, anger, displeasure and indignation against it, fear and dread of those iniquities having power over it. Now thence it cannot be but the same beam of light discovering to the Soul his union with Christ, should necessarily produce sensible and free acknowledgement of the Souls abhorred vileness, seeing it fills the heart with the working of strong affection against his own sinfulness apprehended.

4. In regard, there are constant actings of faith in the believing Soul, while the glory of such a beam of light from Heaven shines into the Soul. There are such renewed operations of faith continues, while that light shines into a Soul that discovers his union with Christ, that there seems (during the continuation of that light into the Soul) to be but one extended drawn forth act of faith. Now seeing there are those constant actings of faith, there cannot also but be constant veiws of the Souls most abhorred wickedness: the Soul by an act of faith veiwing the recenciliation wrought by Christ for him, it cannot also but veiwe the enmity of his Soul against God in Christ; so that from the constant veiwe of the Souls vileness, there cannot but be sensible abhorrence of that vileness.

5. In regard the admiration of the glory of the
Lords

Lords love in Christ, fills the Soul with a constant sense of its own baseness. The Soul cannot be ravished in the admiration of that love, but it must sit down and admire and wonder: now the Soul can never wonder at that love as it is manifested, but it must take in it self as the object of that love, whereby it is that the glory of that love shines forth so infinitely; the Soul cannot but say who am I, what could the Lord discern in me, that such riches of love should work towards me? So that thence the heart (during the continuance of that light that shined from Heaven to discover its union) is kept constantly working against his own vileness, and from the consideration of his vileness, the Soul proceeds to a sensible acknowledgement thereof.

6. In regard such a precious beam of light doth necessarily produce a dear tenderness in the heart towards the honour of God; yea it produceth an infinite contentment and delight in the Soul to be exalting God. Now the Soul cannot be exalting the name of God in that way of his mercy towards him, but he must begin with the sense of his own abhorred wretchedness, towards whom such mercy hath been discovered: he can never speak of the glory of the Lords love in Christ, but he must also speak of the wretchedness and wickedness of himself towards whom that love works, otherwise the Soul veils the glory of the love of God in Christ. So that hence also necessarily proceed sensible acknowledgements of the Souls accursed wretchedness, whenever a beam of light shines from Heaven to discover to a Soul his union with Christ.

Secondly, The second way of manifestation of the perfection of the freedom of the Lords love, which

which is by the Souls manifesting an unwavering confidence in the faithfulness of the Lord to vouchsafe the sweetest embraces of love to the loveless Soul, notwithstanding all its wretchedness. Even this is the constant, certain and infallible effect of a beam of light shining from Heaven to discover to the Soul its union with Christ. This you may observe, in 2. Cor. 5, 6, 7, 8. The Apostle declares, *they had received the earnest of the Inheritance, they had received a pawn from Heaven, a pledge of everlasting communion with God in Christ*, saith he, *we are always confident, willing rather to be absent from the Body and present with the Lord*. So likewise, in Rom. 8. 23. *Those that had received the first fruits of the spirit, did groan after the full redemption of their Bodies; in the mean time being filled with holy confidence, as you may observe, ver. 33. 34. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect?* (speaking in the Persons of those that had received the first fruits of the spirit) *who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died? who shall separate us from the Love of Christ?* And indeed this cannot but be the necessary effect of the spirit of light revealing to the Soul its union with Jesus Christ; seeing the rock of everlasting certainty, whereupon the Soul may build the hopes of the riches of the Lords love in Christ towards him, is revealed by the spirit of light revealing to the Soul its union. For you know the prime way of the spirit of light revealing to the Soul its union, is by revealing to the Souls faith, that it is the will of the Lord to admit that particular Soul into union with Jesus Christ; yea the spirit of Jesus Christ should not execute its office in revealing to the Soul its union, should it not establish

Stablish the Soul in an unwavering confidence (while that light remains) of enjoying the sweetest embraces of the Lords love , notwithstanding all its vile-
ness.

Thirdly , The third act of the Soul , whereby it manifests the perfection of the love of God to unlovely sinners , which is by the souls manifesting its steadfastness in the same confidence , of the fulness of the Lords love in Christ working towards it , under the sense of new infirmities , imperfection , crookedness ; even that is also the certain , necessary effect of the spirit of light discovering to the Soul its union with Jesus Christ. This you may observe in that 2. Cor. 5. *They were sensible of their imperfection while they were in the Body ; yet they were nevertheless confident , having received the earnest of the spirit ,* So Rom. 7. 23 compared with Rom. 8. 1. *Paul though he fought new Combates , though he were ~~now~~ led captive by the law of his members yet notwithstanding he was confident that there was no condemnation , no sentence of vengeance , or dictate of justice , that could pass out against his Soul , that was now admitted into union with the Lord Jesus* And this indeed cannot but be the necessary effect of a beam of light shining from God to manifest unto the Soul its union with Jesus Christ , seeing that beam of light first discovers the Lords blessed unchangeable will , to be the only foundation of that love of God in Christ. Thus when the glory and lustre of the light continues , the sense of the Souls weakness , sinful disposition , imperfection , cannot shake the Souls confidence , in regard of that clear apprehension that then possesses the Soul , that there is nothing in that Soul that is the foundation of that
love

love of God in Jesus Christ that he hopes for : and in regard also a clear apprehension possesses the Soul ; that there are the same motives and arguments in the bosom of that ever blessed God of love, yet to love that unlovely Soul notwithstanding his new infirmities , his new backsliding disposition or proneness to backsliding. Now such a manifestation of the steadfastness in the confidence of the Soul under the sense of new infirmities , cannot but be the effect of such a beam of light , in regard the unchangeableness of the will of God that is revealed , to admit the Soul into union with God in Christ , is clearly revealed by the power of that light ; so that while the beauty and glory of that light continues, though new corrupt dispositions arise in the believing Soul, yet the confidence of the Soul shakes not, because it is built upon the faithfulness of God , in fulfilling his blessed will to the Soul, which will of his is unchangeable. So that then it is apparent , that the name of God is exalted through every believing Soul in the glorious freedom of his love that is in Jesus Christ to unlovely sinners , by and through the spirits discovery to the Soul certainly his union with Jesus Christ.

III. A Soul doth manifest the glorious perfection of the Lords love in Christ to worthless, unlovely sinners , by manifesting such an absolute perfection of the love of God in Christ to sinful Souls , as that love is subject to no variation, alteration or shadow change. When the Soul so walks , as he declares practically , that the rich love of God in Christ to his unworthy Soul , *is the same yesterday and to day and the same for ever ; the foundation thereof standing firm and unmoveable , like Mount Sion that cannot be moved :*

moved : then doth the brightness of the Lords glorious love shine through the Soul , so as the name of God is exalted through it. Thus God glorified himself before the eyes of *Balak* through the mouth of the false Prophet *Balaam* , to give testimony to the unchangeableness of the love of God in Christ to his People *Israel* , by sending that message to *Balaam* , *Numb. 23. 19. God is not a man that he should lye, neither the son of man that he should repent* (that is, not like the sons of men that his thoughts should change) *what he hath spoken shall it not come to pass ?* His words concerning his People shall certainly be fulfilled. [So likewise when the Lord by the mouth of the Prophet *Malachie* , intended to lift up his name in his Peoples hearts, *Mal. 3. 6.* he discovers to them his precious thoughts of love concerning them , in declaring the coming of Jesus Christ with the blessed effect of it , and saith he , *I am the Lord, I change not, therefore the Sons of Jacob are not consumed.* So the Church exalts the name of God, by bearing witness to the unchangeableness of his love to her , *Lament. 3. 22. 22. It is of the Lords mercy that we are not consumed, because his compassion fail not.* Now a Soul manifests the unchangeableness of the Lords love in Christ to his unworthy Soul by its constancy and unmoveableness in that precious confidence of his union with the Lord Jesus, that was once raised in his heart by the power of that evidence of his union. And doubtless it is for that end, that believing Souls might thus exalt the name of God , in the unchangeableness of his love towards them, that the Lord hath prepared unchangeable Grounds, unmoveable Rocks for the feet of their Faith to stand upon, he hath added

his oath to his word, *Heb. 6. 17, 18. That by two immutable things by which it is impossible that God should lye, they might have strong consolation that receive Jesus Christ tendered.* It is for this end that he hath given those unchangeable grounds for faith to build upon.

1. That those Ecclypses of the glory of Gods love in Christ in its unchangeableness, by the constancy of the actings of Faith might be prevented. Surely it was the bowels of the compassions of our tender God in Christ that wrought towards the unlovely Soul, that caused him to stoop down so low, as to add an oath to his word, which gives no security in itself to a Soul more, but only a fuller security to our unbelieving hearts, in our low apprehensions of God, that thereby the precious consolations of his People might not change; and it was the ultimate end of God in the workings of those compassions, that the glory of his own love might not be veiled by the unconstancy and fickleness of the actings of faith, so as Souls should declare by believing, when their hearts are filled with holy actings, that there was a glorious love in God through Christ to unlovely sinners, and when the apprehension of the liveness of those holy actings in their hearts should cease, that then they should again declare that the love of God in Christ is withdrawn again from them.

2. That the glory of his love in its unchangeableness, might shine forth in its brightness with transparent glory, so as the Soul under the saddest defect of holy actings and workings in his own heart, might still declare the precious love of God in Christ to his unlovely to be the same, founded upon his own will

will only , which can never be moved. The constancy and unmoveableness of the Soul in his confidence of his union with Christ , (that the evidence of union with Christ begets) is always the effect of such a beam of light from Heaven to reveal to a Soul his union , so long as the light continues shining into the Soul in its lustre and glory. This you may observe of Paul , in 2 Cor. 5. 5, 6. *Having received the earnest of the spirit , what then ? we are always confident of everlasting communion with God : that is we are confident at all times , constantly our confidence is unmoveable.* Yea doubtless seeing ~~the~~ ^{that} light from the spirit of light shining into any Soul , is but an act of the ~~comforting~~ ^{comforting} office of the Spirit of Jesus Christ , it cannot be but that light shining from the Spirit of light to evidence to the Soul its union , must necessarily establish the heart in that confidence of his union with Jesus Christ , that so long as that light remains the confidence must remain also , and that in its power and strength.

Thus you have the first way opened , how the name of God is exalted through a Soul , which is by the Souls bearing testimony to the truth of the record that the Lord hath given to his love in Jesus Christ by the souls manifesting the same glory of the love of God in Christ to sinful souls , that God himself hath revealed to be in him.

Secondly, God is exalted through the Soul by the souls manifestation, that an incomprehensible perfection of purity and holiness dwells in God, God hath revealed himself in his word not only to be holy, but holiness it self, *Amos 4. 2. The Lord hath sworn by his holiness* , that is , *he hath sworn by himself.* He hath discovered such absolute perfection

of holiness to be in him, that he hath an absolute unspeakable abhorrency of all that is cross and contrary unto holiness in its perfection, *Hab. 1. 13. yea the brightness of the perfection of holiness dwell in him, Exod. 15. 11.* Now then is the name of God exalted through a Soul, when the Soul conceives of God, as thus excellent and wonderful in holiness, when the Soul declares before the world, that his God in Christ is purity and holiness it self. Hence it is that the holy Angels are said to cry to the Lord, *Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, Isa. 6. 3.* and also the office of the dispensers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is described, *Rev. 4. 8, 9.* by their crying Night and Day without ceasing, *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty;* it is for this reason, because the name of God is exalted, when there are such manifestations and declarations of an absolute perfection of holiness to dwell in God. Now a Soul may manifest this absolute perfection of holiness to dwell in God these three or four several ways.

I. By a precious sensible acknowledgement of an infinite disproportion and disagreement, in his most holy, exact, exquisite actions (when the Soul is most mightily assisted by the spirit of God) to the Lords blessed holy will. When a Soul freely declares his righteousness, and all the actings of holiness in his heart to be but unholiness, compared with the exact, perfect, holy will of God, when it acknowledges with the Church, *Isa. 64. 16. That its righteousness is but as filthy rags, as a menstruous Cloath,* all pollution and defilement it self, in comparison of that most blessed, holy will of God, then doth the Soul exalt the Lord, by declaring an absolute perfection of holiness to dwell in him. And thence it is, that confession of sin is necessary for

believing Souls, though sin be pardoned, and though there be large manifestations also of the pardon of sin renewed, because ^{by} those confessions of sin and the large acknowledgements of the vile cursed workings of the corrupt heart, (and the vast disproportion between the Lords blessed, holy will, and his unholy will) the Soul exalts the name of God by bearing testimony to the perfection of holiness that dwells in God.

II. By declaring the least aberration or deviation from the Lords blessed will, to be just matter of infinite wrath to be executed upon the Soul, and just matter of endless perplexity, trouble and vexation unto the Soul. When a Soul manifests the least stragling wandering thought from God, the least indisposedness of the heart to comply with the Lords blessed will, to be just occasion for the Lord to let his fiery indignation burn for ever against the Soul; then doth the Soul bear testimony to that unspeakable perfection of holiness that dwells in God: Then doth the Soul say virtually Thy will O Lord is so perfectly holy, that it is infinitely equal that thy will should be obeyed in all things, in that thou commandest nothing but is so absolutely and perfectly good; that he that neglects obedience to that thy blessed will in the least, is worthy to have exact vengeance executed upon him, for a cross, crooked, rebellious-hearted wretch. Thus the Church, *Lam.* 3. 22. *acknowledges it is of the Lords mercy that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.* Likewise the Psalmist, *Psal.* 130. 3. *O Lord if thou shouldst mark iniquitie who shall stand;* that is to say, Lord the least iniquity if thou dost execute the just desert of it upon any Soul, none then should ever stand before thee; every Soul should perish to eternity. Thus God

is exalted through the Soul; and mark it, this is the use of all those self-judgments that believing Souls are so frequent in the true holy use of, it is for this reason that you shall hear believing Souls both publick and private, passing the sentence of condemnation against themselves, though they know the sentence of condemnation shall not pass against them, though their pardon is ~~passed~~ sealed in the Court of their consciences; yea when the pardon is most evidently sealed to them, then you shall hear them most full of those judgements past against themselves, saying we are worthy O Lord to be confounded, if we were but righteous in our God considered in our selves, to make us an everlasting abhorrence to his purest eyes. Thus by these self judgements they bear publick testimony to the most exact, exquisite perfection of holiness that dwells in God.

III. By manifesting that the least communion with God in Christ, doth necessarily sanctifie any Soul in some degree; When a Soul declares practically; that it is impossible for any Soul to have communion with God in Christ, but he shall participate in some degree of the holiness of God; the disposition of his corrupt will shall be changed, then doth a Soul manifest a perfection of holiness to dwell in God.

IV. By declaring that a perfection of conformity to the Lords blessed will, ought to be the only satisfying object of the desires of any soul. When a Soul manifests practically and apparently, that no Soul ought to take up any rest in any degree of holiness less then a perfect conformity to the Lords blessed will. Now this perfect conformity to the Lords will consists in three or four particulars.

1. When he declares that every Soul ought to will every thing that the Lord himself wills.

2. When he declares that every object that the will of the Soul ought to close with, ought to be closed with, only because God wills it.

3. when the Soul wills only that which the blessed Majesty of God wills.

4. When the Soul wills every thing in the same manner that God himself wills it. Now there are four things to be considered in the manner of the Lords willing any thing.

1. Whatever the Lord wills, he wills with infinite freedom. So that then the perfect conformity of the Souls will consists in the freedom of the Souls compliance with the will of God, when he wills what God himself wills, and wills it freely according as God wills it.

2. Whatever the Lord wills, he wills purely, he wills it because he wills it.

3. Whatever the Lord wills, he wills with facility and easiness.

4. In the Lords willing that which is holy, his will moves necessarily, though yet with infinite freedom. It is with infinite freedom that the Lord wills holiness; but yet there is such a necessity from the essence and being of God, that his will wills holiness only, and that he can will nothing else but what is holy. Thus when the Soul shall practically manifest, that the groanings and thirstings, and pantings and breathings of every Soul should never cease till there be this blessed union of wills between God and them, that their wills should even move as it were in a circle of holiness, as the blessed will of God moves; then doth a Soul declare that an infinite perfection of holiness dwells in God, and then is God exalted through the Soul;

Now

Now it remains to be opened, that the name of God is exalted through every believing Soul, in this transcendent glory of his holiness, to whom the spirit doth reveal certainly his union with the Lord Jesus: This must appear by the manifesting that the spirit of Jesus Christ in revealing to any Soul his union with Christ, doth certainly cause the Soul to walk in those ways, through which the name of God is exalted in the brightness and perfection of the glory of his holiness through the Soul

I. The Spirit of Christ in evidencing to the Soul his union with Christ, doth necessarily draw forth those sensible free acknowledgements from the Soul, of an infinite disproportion and disagreement in the most exact, exquisite action that ever the Soul performed to the Lords infinite, holy will. This you may observe in, *Isa. 64.* comparing *ver. 4.* and *ver. 6.* saith the Church, *From the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee what he hath prepared for them that wait for him,* that is for the believing Soul, (for waiting is but an extended act of faith) And then under those apprehensions of the unspeakableness of the Lords Love in Christ to every believing Soul, she breaks out, but *we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness* (all our duties and performances, our most holy actions) *they are but as filthy raggs.* Likewise it is observable in the holy man *Job*, who stood much upon his own uprightness and integrity, *Chap. 23. 11, 12.* and *Chap. 27. 5, 6.* *Till I die I will not remove my integrity from me;* that is, I will not deny my innocency and righteousness; I have walked before God with a perfect heart, I will never

reproach my self till I die, so Chap. 31. 6. *I have been weighed in an even Ballance that God may know my integrity*; yet in Chap. 4. 3, 4 this Job that could declare so many righteous acts of his own, begins freely to acknowledge, that all his righteousness was as vileness; though those actions of righteousness had been performed by him with much integrity, yet there was an infinite disproportion between the holy actings of the Lords blessed will: then saith Job, *behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I have laid my hand upon my mouth, once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea twice, but I will proceed no further: I will not call to God to weigh me in a Ballance any more that he may know my integrity*; so Chap. 42. 5, 6. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor my self and repent in dust and ashes* repent, that is, the thoughts of my self now changed, I am so ashamed I loath and abhor my self in the sight of all my integrity and righteousness that I so much stood upon. And certainly there is an infallible necessity of a Souls exalting the name of God through those sensible free acknowledgements of the infinite disproportion between the holy actings of his will, and the holy actings of the Lords will, whenever the spirit of Christ do reveal to any Soul his Union.

1. In regard the faculty of the Souls spiritual sight was then lively, active and ready for exercise. The eye of the Soul is as it were open, and in every duty that he performs to God, he can behold the least inward sluggishness and indisposedness, so as the least of those infirmities is burdensom; and mark, that is the reason that believing Souls once decaying in the life of holiness, lose the sense of the evidence to their Souls of their union with Christ, because every day their

their own formality, hardness, blockishness, insensibleness, is less burdensome to them, because the faculty of spiritual sight is out of exercise. And that's the reason also that under the clearest sight of the Souls union with Christ, there is the largest confession of the Souls own vileness, the spiritual faculty of sight in the believing Soul, is then drawn up in its strength: that's one of the great reasons why those Souls that enjoy the clearest revelations of the Lords love in Christ are the most abased Souls.

2. When the spirit reveals to the Soul its union with Christ, then the precious heavenly light that discovers all the unsuitableness of the Souls will to Gods will, shines clearly and actually. The transparent light of the Lords love in Christ to so unlovely a Soul, is like a blessed, heavenly Lamp lighted up within the Believers heart, through the light of which the Soul may see every unsuitableness in his will to the Lords blessed will; and that in its vileness, in its most odious native colours: yea, that light of the Lords Love in Christ to the loveless Soul, causes the infinite right that the Lord hath to claim all the powers and possibilities of the Soul to be subject to him, to shine clearly in the Soul; it makes the heart say within it self, O how infinitely due is every acting of my Soul to God, to be employed only for his blessed pleasure: so that now there is light without to enable the Soul to see the unsuitableness of its will to Gods will; as well as there is light within, that the Soul seeth not only like a man having a perfect sight, but as a man with a perfect sight in a clear Sun-shine day, that shall discern every mote in the Sun Beams, that a man with a clear sight in a dark day cannot behold: and thence

it is, that the evidence unto the Soul of its union with Christ cannot but draw forth an acknowledgement of the infinite disproportion of the Souls actings to the Lords holy will, in regard the Soul is then enabled to discern the smallest unsutableness that is in his will to the Lords will.

3. In regard that light that shines into the Soul at that time, discovers those unholinesses in the holy actings of the Soul, whereof a believing Soul is most peculiarly guilty in all his holy actings. There are four wants of holiness in all the actings of believing Souls in some measure and degree.

First, The want of pure Love in all the holy actings of the Soul. The want of the Souls aiming meerly at the exaltation and glory of his dearest Father in the Lord Jesus, and so acting in obedience to the Fathers blessed will, from a pure Child-like disposition working in the heart, that disposes him to comply with the Fathers will only, only because his Fathers will. This is pure Love, when the Soul out of Love to God himself, without relation to any benefit or advantage that the Soul enjoys without relation to any fear of any loss or damage that the Soul should suffer through disobedience, to aim at and intend only the fulfilling of his blessed Fathers will; now this in every holy duty the Soul performs, is in some degree of its perfection wanting.

Secondly, There is the want of freedom of Spirit or liberty, in their holy actings in their wills, agreeing with the Lords blessed will. When the Spirit of Jesus Christ breaths upon the holy disposition and inclination, infused into Believers wills most sweetly and powerfully, and assist them strongly in their exercise, yet then while they dwell in these Bodies of Clay, (while the old

old man remains not wholly crucified) there wants some perfection of Liberty in their Spirits in these holy actings the soul is not wholly void of some inclination and disposition acting secretly, that bends the soul from those holy actings that yet the *Soul* is exercised in.

Thirdly, In the holy actings of believing Souls, there is a want of fulness of complacency, delight and contentment in those holy actings. The flesh mutters and murmurs against the actings of the Spirit; this made *Paul* say, *with my mind I serve the Law of God, and with my flesh the Law of Sin, and I delight in the Law of God according to the inward man*: still there is an opposite party that is not satisfied in those holy actings; *the Spirit is willing, saith Christ concerning his Apostles, but the flesh is weak*; the flesh will never answer the spirits readiness perfectly, so as all the whole powers and possibilities of Soul and Body should run parallel with one another in their holy actings, till this mortal shall have put on immortality.

Fourthly, There is a want of an absolute nothingness in the Soul, in the precious, holy actings of the Soul. That vile principle of Self-confidence is so firmly rooted in our natures, that when the sanctifying Spirit of Jesus Christ hath had a blessed work upon the unholy heart; yet then the bitter root of Self-confidence will be sending forth some cursed sprigs, ~~he~~ will sprouting forth in some unholy actings, even in the midst of the Souls actings, the Soul being never perfectly and absolutely nothing in himself in his holy actings. Thence you may observe from your experience, an infinite difficulty that you find after great enlargements of heart in a holy duty, then to think no better of your selves for the duty;

duty; It must be a mighty power of the Spirit that must draw forth from a Soul at such a time that voice in sincerity, saying, not I, but the grace of God that was in me. Now that Light that discovers unto a believing Soul those unholinesses of his, (whereof the believing Soul is constantly guilty in some degree in all his holy actings) is an unseparable attendant upon the Spirit of Light, evidencing to the Soul its union with the Lord Jesus.

There is only the light of the Lords Love in Christ to the worthless nothing-like Soul, that discovers the want of pure Love in the Souls actings of holiness. It is the vision of the Lords Love unto the Soul, that excites and stirs up actings of Love in the Soul unto God: So likewise the vision of the Lords Love in Christ unto the Soul, enables the Soul to discern the want of pure, perfect Love in his Soul unto God. It is then when a Soul sees that Love of God in Christ unto his unlovely ^{soul} unspeakable ~~fact~~, that he apprehends deeply, that the most superlative actings of his Love are due from him unto God again; and then doth the Soul discern the great evil of the imperfection of the actings of his own Love, so as to answer the actings of the Lords will out of pure Love only. Thence it is, when the Spirit of Jesus Christ doth evidence unto it his union with Christ; then any slavish workings of fear are tedious and burdensom unto the Soul; whereas before the Soul thought those actings of fear (if they brought forth but some Tears) to be precious actings, but now it loaths them. So likewise it is only the Light of the Lords Love in Jesus Christ to the worthless soul, that discovers clearly the want of freedom and liberty in the heart in its holy actings. Then indeed the soul groans not only for the
the

hat the want of his heart answering the Lords will in obe-
 ice, (and so for want of holy actings) but he
 groans under the want of freedom of spirit in those ho-
 ly actings also. So likewise the want of perfect rest
 and complacency of the Soul in his holy actings, is
 made manifest, only through the light of the glori-
 ous Love of the Lord in Jesus Christ to the loveless
 Soul. No Soul can discern matter wherein he may
 take up a fulness of rest only in obedience to the Lords
 will, till he discerns God as he is in Jesus Christ to
 his unlovely Soul; and therefore the want of the
 Souls fulness of contentment in the actings of holiness,
 can never be made clearly manifest, till the light of
 the Lords love in Jesus Christ shines upon it; yea
 the lively beauty, excellency and glory that is in the
 bare fulfilling of the Lords holy will, only shines
 clearly to the Soul through the light of the Lords
 love in Jesus Christ. Yea the want of an absolute
 nothingness in himself in his holy actings, is made
 apparent to the Soul through the light of the Lords
 Love in Jesus Christ shining upon him. Never can a
 Soul apprehend that all that he is, and all that the
 powers and possibilities of his Soul can perform, and
 infinitely more, is due from his Soul unto God, till
 the glorious light of the Lords love in Christ shine
 upon him: It is only when the light of that love shines,
 that the heart says in sincerity to it self, what thinkest
 thou, O my heart, is due to thee, though now thou
 hast been enlarged by the assistance of the Spirit of
 Christ in this holy duty? Art not an unprofitable
 Servant, not having given to the Lord the hundred
 thousandth part what thou dost owe to him.

IV. When the Spirit evidenceth unto any Soul his
 union with the Lord Jesus, sensible, free acknow-
 ledgements

ledgements of an infinite disproportion in the most holy actings of the Soul to the Lords holy, blessed will, are necessarily drawn forth, in regard the unholiness that constantly attends in some degree the actings of holiness in Souls, are at the same time most cross and opposite to the Souls desires. The desires of the soul being but the reachings forth of love, and the highest actings of love being the necessary effect of those highest discoveries of the Lords love to the soul: thence necessarily the highest desires of the soul are raised to a superlative height after fulness of unity, and perfect communion with God in Christ, when the spirit evidenceth to the soul his union with Jesus Christ.

V. When the spirit evidenceth to the soul its union with Christ, the spiritual sense of the soul is then most lively. The spirit of Jesus Christ being constantly a quickening spirit, where he is a comforting spirit, the soul being filled with comfort, cannot but be filled with life; and when the soul is filled with life, sense is also lively; so that thence the soul at that time is most sensible of his own unholiness, and thence necessarily is constrained to acknowledge sensibly the disagreement of his will in his most holy actings to the Lords most holy blessed will.

2. The spirit evidencing to any soul its union with the Lord Jesus, doth certainly draw forth free declarations from the soul, that the least transgression of the Lords blessed will is just occasion of incensing the wrath of God infinitely and eternally against the soul, and just occasion of unspeakable perplexity and grief to the soul. So that through this a soul declares that blessed will of God to be so absolutely, so perfectly holy, that the least opposing of that blessed will

will, might justly deprive him of acceptance. Thus you may observe when the spirit of Jesus Christ stirred up the heart of the Church to precious believing Acts, *Lament.* 3. 22, 23, 24. then did the same spirit draw from their mouths sensible declarations, that the least of their transgressions did justly expose them to the everlasting burning, to be consumed in the fire of the Lords Indignation; then she cries out *It is of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed because his compassions fails not.* So likewise, in *Psal.* 130. 3. when the heart of the Psalmist was up in believing actings, then saith he, *If thou shouldst mark iniquity who shall stand?* The least iniquity that remains in the most sanctified souls, were enough to cast them down into the everlasting Lake of burning; if the Lord should act in justice with them. Hence it is, that when Jesus Christ draws forth the sweetest believing actings in the hearts of Believers, then they are most ready to accept of any chastisement that the Lord inflicts upon them, in respect of their transgressions, *Lament.* 3. 39. So that thence souls enjoying the clearest beams of light from the spirit of light, revealing unto them their union with the Lord Jesus, are commonly most filled with acclamations against themselves, and all their prayers filled with self-judgings and abhorings. Yea likewise hence it is also, that believing souls enjoying the evidences of their union with Jesus Christ, are filled with those high admirations, and that their souls conceive of the love of God in Jesus Christ to them as a mystery unsearchable, past finding out either by Men or Angels, because then they apprehend the infinite worthiness of those thousands and ten thousands, and Millions of iniquity that they have committed, to incense the anger of the Lord against their

their Souls. Yea likewise hence also proceed those enlarged desires after the sweetest things of heart for sin, from those Souls to whom the Spirit of Jesus Christ hath certainly evidenced their union with him. But as the Scripture testifies to the truth of this; so reason testifies that there cannot but be a connexion between the spirits evidencing to the soul its union with Jesus Christ, and the souls sense of worthiness for the least transgression, to be punished with everlasting indignation.

1. In regard the spirits evidencing unto the soul that it is united to Jesus Christ, doth declare and manifest to the soul the equity of a perfect subjection of every soul, to the Lords blessed holy will. When the spirit bears witness to the soul, that the blessed Majesty of Heaven is willing to be reconciled and united to poor despicable, rebellious wretches, to those whose hearts swell with enmity against the Crown of his glory, yea when the spirit testifies that the Lord even seeks and sues for the reconciliation with the soul, thence it cannot but be clearly manifested to the Soul that is but infinitely equal that a poor rebellious wretch, yea such a desperate enemy to his blessed Majesty, should consent to what the Lord propounds. Now from this manifestation of the infinite equity of a perfect subjection to be given by every soul to the Lords blessed will, from thence there is necessarily such deep apprehensions of the infinite injustice and unsearchable depth of unrighteousness and wickedness that is in the least contradicting that blessed will, that the Soul conceives every such transgression or disobedience to that blessed will, to be infinitely worthy to be punished with infinite and everlasting indignation.

2. The Spirits evidencing unto the Soul, that it is united unto Jesus Christ, doth declare the absolute perfection of goodness in the Lords blessed will, so as it manifests every motion of that will to be absolutely transcendently good. When the spirit bears witness unto any soul of its union with Jesus Christ, it represents God only as a mass of love in Jesus Christ; It represents God willing all kinds and degrees of good unto every Soul that will accept it; and thence every act of the Lords blessed will is represented to the Soul as absolutely good: now by that means every transgression of the Lords will is represented as in opposition to infinite goodness, and thence every transgression cannot but be apprehended as a just occasion for infinite wrath and indignation to burn in its fierceness and extremity against the Soul.

3. The Spirits evidencing unto a Soul his union with Christ, doth necessarily occasion the soul to declare to the honour of God, that the least degree of communion with God, causes any Soul to participate in some degree of his holiness. This the Apostle testifies, in 2. Cor. 3. 18. *That while they did with open-face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, they were changed into the same image from glory to glory; that is, they are conformed into the likeness of God while they see the beams of his excellency glitter upon them, through the great truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; yea, that gradually according as they behold the glory, so they are changed also by degrees from glory unto glory, from one degree of likeness unto God to another degree.* Thus likewise the Apostle testifies, 1 John 1. 5, 6. *That God is light, that is to say, that he*

is holiness itself, purely holy, ~~nothing but~~ holy,
 and then bears witness that it is impossible for
 any soul to have the least fellowship with him,
 but we must be partakers of that holiness; ~~if we~~
 say that we have fellowship with him ~~and walk~~
 in darkness, we lye and do not the truth: as if the
 Apostle had spoken in these words; The Lord is so
 infinitely transcendently holy, such an infinite per-
 fection of holiness dwells in him, and an infinite a-
 verseness to any thing that is unholy, that it is im-
 possible any soul should dwell with him but he must
 participate of his holiness. So in 1 John 2. 6. ~~He that~~
 saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk e-
 ven as he walked. So likewise he refutes the same
 thing again, in 1 John 3. 6. ~~Whoever~~ abideth in
 him (that is, ^{which are} united to Jesus Christ, both union
 and communion with him) ~~sinneth not~~ that is, he
 sins not according to the manner that he sinned before
 his union with Jesus Christ; there are other disposi-
 tion infused into his heart, there are some drops of
 the holiness of Jesus Christ communicated to his Soul
 through his union with Jesus Christ; ~~whoever sin-~~
 neth, hath, not seen him neither knows him; that is,
 whoever sins in the same manner that he did when he
 was void of the knowledge of Christ, void of union
 and communion with him, whatever he professeth, he
 had not the experimental knowledge of the Love of
 God that joyned his heart to Christ: he never had
 the true vision of the glory of Jesus Christ, he hath
 not so seen him whereby his Soul was transformed in-
 to the likeness of Christ. And in regard of this, that
 the Spirits evidencing unto the Soul that he is united
 unto Jesus Christ, doth necessarily cause such a de-
 claration, that the least degree of communion with
 God

God cause the Soul to participate of the holiness of God. Thence it is,

First, That the sin and transgression of a Soul enjoying the evidence of his union with Christ, is so intollerably burdensom. This is the reason why souls enjoying the evidence of their union with Christ, melt and break so sweetly under the remembrance of any sin, that they are confounded in themselves, that they loath and abhor themselves in regard the glory of God is so ecclipsed; and thence the remembrance of his own sin wounds so deeply, because in effect he by sensual, formal, unworthy walking doth declare that communion with God, doth not make him partaker of his holiness.

Secondly, This is the reason why the sins of those that are united to Jesus Christ, do stir up the displeasure of God in a superlative manner; (though his displeasure works but in a fatherly manner against their Persons) because by their sins the glory of his holiness is ecclipsed; they profess God not to be so absolutely holy but a Soul may have fellowship with God, and yet be unholy, and this casts a black cloud upon the Lords perfect holiness. Hence it is that the Lord complained so bitterly against the *chosen Nation of the Jews*, when they walked unholy and unsuitably, because they caused his name to be polluted among the Heathen, Ezek. 36. 21, 22, 23. Thence the displeasure of God was incensed so high against the holy man David because of his unworthy walking, 2. Sam. 12. 14. Thou hast caused the enemies of God to blaspheme, that is, to speak against God, to have unworthy thoughts of God; and thence it is that the Lord testifies an higher degree of abhorrence of his Peoples sins, than he doth of the sins of those that

are not joyned to him, and ^{ad}mitted into union with him in Christ : thence the Lord commands the Apostle to profess more displeasure against the sins of them that profess themselves to be one with God, then against the sins of any other, 1. Cor. 5. 9, 10 11. *If any man that is called a Brother be a Fornicator, or covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such a one no not to eat ; It is not meant eating at the Lords Table, but to sit down in a civil way of eating at the Table with him ; he vails Gods glory and professes God is not so absolutely pure but he can behold iniquity, or not so absolutely holy but there may be communion with him, and yet be unholy.*

Thirdly, This is the reason, that Souls enjoying the evidence of their union with Christ, declares such ardent desires after, and such a constant necessity of attending upon the Lords appointments for communion, because hereby they declare, that converse and communion with God doth necessarily make a Soul partaker of his holiness. And it is from hence that Souls are always longing and breathing after communion with God through his ordinances that they might be partakers of his holiness : so it is through the manifestation of those breathings after communion with him, that their Souls declare practically, that still further every degree of communion with God, doth make the Soul further partaker of his holiness ; seeing they declare it is for that end they attend upon the Lord in ordinances, and long after ordinances that they might go on to perfect holiness,

Fourthly, This is the reason that the Spirit of God doth so vehemently press and urge believing Souls

to manifest holiness, to walk worthy of God, and worthy of their high calling that is in Christ, because hereby they declare that communion and converse with God doth necessarily make a Soul partaker of the holiness of God. And thence it is, that walking holily, is call'd a walking ^{worthy} of their high calling, Eph. 4. 1. And it is called a walking worthy of God, Col. 1. 10. Thus the Scripture evidenceth, that spirits revealing his union with Christ, doth necessarily occasion the Soul to declare that the least degree of communion and converse with God, doth make a Soul partaker of the holiness of God. And likewise even reason it self testifies it.

1. In regard the spirits evidencing unto the Soul its union with Jesus Christ, gives the Soul such large and sweet experience, that communion with God doth make the Soul participate of the holiness of God; that thence the Soul cannot but declare what he sees and knows by his own experience. When once the spirit of light reveals to the Soul his union with Christ, both to faith and sense, a Soul is made to discern so clearly, such precious dispositions of holiness, to be infused from the spirit of Jesus Christ into his heart; that thence he hath such undeniable experience that the least vision of the glory of God in Christ, the least communion of wills between God and the Soul in Christ, doth make the Soul so partake of the holiness of God, that the Soul cannot but manifest it upon all occasions practically, he cannot but declare it ~~pro~~verbially upon every call he hath to give such a testimony according to that in Acts 4. 20. *We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard.*

2. The spirits evidencing unto a Soul his union with

Christ, gives the Soul such affecting experiences of the sanctifying vertue of communion with God, that the heart is even fired with affection, and thence it cannot but declare the glorious sanctifying-vertue in communion with God in Christ. The soul receiving light from the spirit of light to declare to his union with Christ; doth not only enjoy the experience of the vertue of communion, but at that time, that experience so takes and ravishes the heart, stirs up such rapture of love and delight in those acts of holiness, that thence fire may as soon kept in the Bosom and the Cloaths not smell (as Solomon speaks) as the experience that the soul enjoys be kept close unrevealed.

3. The spirits evidencing unto any soul his union with Christ, begets such ardent, such superlative actings of love towards the honour of God, and such an high degree of abhorrence of all dishonour unto God, that thence the manifestation of the absolute perfection of holiness that dwells in God, (by declaring that the least communion with him makes a soul holy) doth necessarily grow in that soul. It is the great *Maxim* of the Covenant, that the vision of the Lords love to the soul, begets love in the soul to God again: so that then the glorious testimony of the Lords Love in Christ, in admission of the soul into union with Christ, cannot but raise the highest actings of love to God in the soul, and those actings of love towards God, do and will take the honour and glory of God for their object as well as any other attribute that can be conceived in God.

4. The spirits evidence unto any soul of his union with Christ doth, cause all the engagements that are laid by God upon a believing soul, to ex-

all the name of God in his holiness, to return upon the Soul with power and irresistible strength. There is indeed constantly some degree of sense in every believing soul of infinite engagements laid by God upon him, to oblige and engage him to exalt God in his holiness, but those engagements are weaker or stronger, according to the clearness or darkness of the spirit's evidence to the Soul of its union with Christ. And those engagements that the Soul apprehends to be laid upon him to exalt God in his holiness, are also actually brought to the soul's remembrance and press upon the Soul, according to the frequency of the spirit's giving actual evidence unto the Soul of his union with Christ. So that then only when the Spirit doth actually evidence unto the Soul with most clearness and perspicuity its union with Christ, then do all the engagements that believing Souls apprehend that God have laid upon them, to bind them to exalt God in his holiness, come upon them with power and force so as a constraint comes upon the spirit, the Soul being drawn as it were by cords, to study and exalt the name of God in his holiness.

As for instance,

First, when the spirit evidenceth to the Soul his union with Christ, the Soul is actually at that time sensible that he was chosen from eternity to be a vessel of honour, into whom the holiness of God should be poured, that the glory of the Lord's holiness might appear. So that then the Soul stands strongly bent, through the strength of this engagement God hath laid upon him to lift up the name of God in his holiness, and to make the holiness of the name of God appear.

Secondly, When the spirit evidenceth to the Soul

his union with Christ; the Soul is actually sensible that the Lord hath created him anew, *for that very end that he might glorifie the Lord in his holiness.* According to that in *Eph. 2. 10. We are all his workmanship created unto good works*; that is, created unto holiness, to fruits of holiness, and so consequently to the manifestation of the glory of the Lords holiness.

Thirdly, When the spirit manifests unto the soul his union with Christ; it is actually sensible that the very end of God in the communication of any of his holiness unto him is the manifestation of the glory of his holiness through the Soul. Thus then in regard the spirits evidence of a souls union with Christ, doth occasion a being actually sensible of deep engagements laid upon him by God to be exalting him in his holiness: thence the spirits evidence doth necessarily occasion the Soul to declare, that the least degree of communion with God doth make it to participate in some degree of the Lords holiness. So that it is evident both from Scripture and Reason, that this third Testimony concerning the absolute perfection of the Lords holiness, whereby he is exalted through any Soul is the necessary, certain, infallible effect of the spirits evidencing to any soul his union with the Lord Jesus.

4 The fourth way whereby God is exalted through the Soul, by bearing witness to the perfection of his holiness, is this, when a Soul doth declare that a perfection of conformity to the Lords blessed will in every thing, ought to be the only satisfying object of the desires of any Soul. Now even this precious God-magnifying act of a believing Soul, is also the necessary effect of the spirits evidencing to any

any soul its union with Christ. Thus you shall observe that the spirit of Jesus Christ produced this blessed effect in *Paul's* heart, to whom the spirit did vouchsafe the clearest revelation, and most Soul-ravishing Testimony of his union with Jesus Christ, *Phil. 3. 12, 13, 14. Brethren I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are before, I press towards the mark of the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Here are four or five things the Apostle testifies to be the practice of his own Soul; for the exalting of the Lord in his holiness, and so consequently testifies it to be the effect of the spirit of Jesus Christ in any believing Soul, to whom he reveals his union with Christ.

First, He testifies his estimation of himself, that he doth account himself as yet to be altogether imperfect, unholy; I count not my self to have apprehended: he testifies that the power and vertue of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was not yet fully made manifest in his Soul; that is, the sin mortifying vertue of the death of Jesus Christ; the quickening and enlivening vertue of the resurrection of Christ is not yet fully attained to in his Soul.

Secondly, He testifies that the only end upon which the eye of his Soul was fixed, was a perfect conformity unto Christ. The fulness of an experimental knowledge of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as he tells you, *ver. 12. he follows after that he may apprehend that for which also he was apprehended of Jesus Christ*, and also he tells us, *ver. 14. he pressed forward towards the mark*, and *ver. 10 that the only end of his was to know Christ*, that is, to know him experimentally, in the vertue of his death,

and the power of his resurrection, having the sense of the glory, vertue and power of his death and resurrection in his own spirit: so that herein he testifies that his Soul stands resolved to be satisfied with no degree of holiness, and therein by consequence testifies that nothing but the fulness of likeness to Jesus Christ shall ever satisfy.

Thirdly he testifies that all his labours and endeavours after this experience of all the vertue of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, are accounted by him as nothing, *I forget saith he those things that are behind, ver. 13.* not that his Soul was forgetful of those precious experiences that the Lord hath given him of the death of Christ in killing his sin and the power of Christ in enlivening his Soul, but he minded not all the degrees of the victory of the death and resurrection of Christ that his Soul was partaker of; so as to please himself with thoughts that he had attained to what he was commanded, he minded them not so as to satisfy himself with that measure; though questionless the measure was very large; seeing he testifies often, *that he was more than a Conqueror over all the powers of sin; and that he was able to do all things through Christ strengthening of him; and that he was ready to abound and ready to want;* his heart being disposed in a holy temper in all conditions, ready to sanctifie God in all his providences; yet saith he *I forget all those, that is, I do not so remember them as to satisfy my self that I had attained so much.* The whole form of the expression is but an allusion to Runners in a Race, that never look how many paces of ground they have passed over, so as to hinder them from running to the mark, but they keep their eye singly fixed upon the

the mark that they are to attain to, so saith he, forget the things that are behind.

Fourthly, He testifies, that the strength of all his affections, the whole intention of his soul is bent towards the attaining the fulness of the experience, of the virtue and power of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, this he testifies *ver. 13.* reaching forth unto those things that are before; (breathing forth) still in a metaphorical way he alludes to *Run in a Race*, that run without stretched arms, reaching forth towards the mark, the word in the Original is *καταρτίζω* which *Beza* renders, contending with the strength of my Soul after the things before, after the height of the virtue of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; that is, the experimental knowledge of the virtue of his death and resurrection, that is to say, the full communion with Christ in his holiness.

Fifthly, He testifies that he passeth over, or leaps over all difficulties, all impediments and hindrances, in his striving after this perfect conformity to Jesus Christ in his Death and Resurrection, which is also contained in that he doth *press* towards the mark, he doth thrust through all troops of impediments that stand to oppose him in his way, and with all the powers and possibilities of his soul extended, makes the pursuit after the full experience of the virtue of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yea likewise he bears witness, that every sincere believing soul ought to walk according to this rule, to be thus minded *ver. 14.* *Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded;* That is, let us thus count of our selves as infinitely short of that which ought only to satisfy our souls, whatever degree of holiness we have

Christ, gives the Soul such affecting experiences of the sanctifying vertue of communion with God, that the heart is even fired with affection, and thence it cannot but declare the glorious sanctifying vertue in communion with God in Christ. The soul receiving light from the spirit of light to declare to his union with Christ; doth not only enjoy the experience of the vertue of communion, but at that time, that experience so takes and ravishes the heart, stirs up such rapture of love and delight in those acts of holiness, that thence fire may as soon be kept in the Bosom and the Cloaths not smell (as *Salomon* speaks) as the experience that the soul enjoys be kept close unrevealed.

3. The spirits evidencing unto any soul his union with Christ, begets such ardent, such superlative actings of love towards the honour of God, and such an high degree of abhorrence of all dishonour unto God, that thence the manifestation of the absolute perfection of holiness that dwells in God, (by declaring that the least communion with him makes a soul holy) doth necessarily grow in that soul. It is the great *Maxim* of the Covenant, that the vision of the Lords love to the soul, begets love in the soul to God again: so that then the glorious testimony of the Lords Love in Christ, in admission of the soul into union with Christ, cannot but raise the highest actings of love to God in the soul, and those actings of love towards God, do and will take the honour and glory of God for their object as well as any other attribute that can be conceived in God.

4. The spirits evidence unto any soul of his union with Christ doth, cause all the engagements that are laid by God upon a believing soul, to ex-

all the name of God in his holiness, to return upon the Soul with power and irresistible strength. There is indeed constantly some degree of sense in every believing soul of infinite engagements laid by God upon him, to oblige and engage him to exalt God in his holiness, but those engagements are weaker or stronger, according to the clearness or darkness of the spirits evidence to the Soul of its union with Christ: And those engagements that the Soul apprehends to be laid upon him to exalt God in his holiness, are also actually brought to the souls remembrance and press upon the Soul, according to the frequency of the spirits giving actual evidence unto the Soul of his union with Christ. So that then only when the Spirit doth actually evidence unto the Soul with most clearness and perspicuity its union with Christ, then do all the engagements that believing Souls apprehend that God have laid upon them, to bind them to exalt God in his holiness, come upon them with power and force so as a constraint comes upon the spirit, the Soul being drawn as it were by cords, to study and exalt the name of God in his holiness.

As for instance,

First, when the spirit evidenceth to the Soul his union with Christ, the Soul is actually at that time sensible that he was chosen from eternity to be a vessel of honour, into whom the holiness of God should be poured, that the glory of the Lords holiness might appear. So that then the Soul stands strongly bent, through the strength of this engagement God hath laid upon him to lift up the name of God in his holiness, and to make the holiness of the name of God appear.

Secondly, When the spirit evidenceth to the Soul

his union with Christ ; the Soul is actually sensible that the Lord hath created him anew, *for that very end that he might glorifie the Lord in his holiness.* According to that in *Eph. 2. 10. We are all his workmanship created unto good works ;* that is , created unto holiness, to fruits of holiness, and so consequently to the manifestation of the glory of the Lords holiness.

Thirdly , When the spirit manifests unto the soul his union with Christ ; it is actually sensible that the very end of God in the communication of any of his holiness unto him is the manifestation of the glory of his holiness through the Soul. Thus then in regard the spirits evidence of a souls union with Christ, doth occasion a being actually sensible of deep engagements laid upon him by God to be exalting him in his holiness : thence the spirits evidence doth necessarily occasion the Soul to declare , that the least degree of communion with God doth make it to participate in some degree of the Lords holiness. So that it is evident both from Scripture and Reason , that this third Testimony concerning the absolute perfection of the Lords holiness, whereby he is exalted through any Soul is the necessary , certain , infallible effect of the spirits evidencing to any soul his union with the Lord Jesus.

4 The fourth way whereby God is exalted through the Soul , by bearing witness to the perfection of his holiness , is this , when a Soul doth declare that a perfection of conformity to the Lords blessed will in every thing , ought to be the only satisfying object of the desires of any Soul. Now even this precious God-magnifying act of a believing Soul , is also the necessary effect of the spirits evidencing to any

any soul its union with Christ. Thus you shall observe that the spirit of Jesus Christ produced this blessed effect in *Paul's* heart, to whom the spirit did vouchsafe the clearest revelation, and most Soul-ravishing Testimony of his union with Jesus Christ, *Phil. 3. 12, 13, 14. Brethren I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are before, I press towards the mark of the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Here are four or five things the Apostle testifies to be the practice of his own Soul, for the exalting of the Lord in his holiness, and so consequently testifies it to be the effect of the spirit of Jesus Christ in any believing Soul, to whom he reveals his union with Christ.

First, He testifies his estimation of himself, that he doth account himself as yet to be altogether imperfect, unholy; I count not my self to have apprehended: he testifies that the power and vertue of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was not yet fully made manifest in his Soul; that is, the sin mortifying vertue of the death of Jesus Christ; the quickening and enlivening vertue of the resurrection of Christ is not yet fully attained to in his Soul.

Secondly, He testifies that the only end upon which the eye of his Soul was fixed, was a perfect conformity unto Christ. The fulness of an experimental knowledge of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as he tells you, *ver. 12. he follows after that he may apprehend that for which also he was apprehended of Jesus Christ*, and also he tells us, *ver. 14. he pressed forward towards the mark*, and *ver. 10 that the only end of his was to know Christ*, that is, to know him experimentally, in the vertue of his death,

and the power of his resurrection, having the sense of the glory, vertue and power of his death and resurrection in his own spirit: so that herein he testifies that his Soul stands resolved to be satisfied with no degree of holiness, and therein by consequence testifies that nothing but the fulness of likeness to Jesus Christ shall ever satisfy.

Thirdly he testifies that all his labours and endeavours after this experience of all the vertue of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, are accounted by him as nothing, *I forget saith he those things that are behind*, ver. 13. not that his Soul was forgetful of those precious experiences that the Lord hath given him of the death of Christ in killing his sin and the power of Christ in enlivening his Soul, but he minded not all the degree of the victory of the death and resurrection of Christ that his Soul was partaker of; so as to please himself with thoughts that he had attained to what he was commanded he minded them not so as to satisfy himself with that measure; though questionless the measure was very large; seeing he testifies often, *that he was more than a Conqueror over all the powers of sin*, and *that he was able to do all things through Christ strengthening of him*; and that he was ready to abound and ready to want; his heart being disposed in a holy temper in all conditions, ready to sanctifie God in all his providences; yet saith he *I forget all those*, that is, I do not so remember them as to satisfy my self that I had attained so much. The whole form of this expression is but an allusion to Runners in a Race, that never look how many paces of ground they have passed over, so as to hinder them from running to the mark, but they keep their eye singly fixed upon the

the things that they are to attain to, so saith he, forget the things that are behind.

Fourthly, He testifies, that the strength of all his affections, the whole intention of his soul is bent towards the attaining the fulness of the experience, of the virtue and power of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, this he testifies ver. 13. reaching forth unto those things that are before; (breathing forth) still in a metaphorical way he alludes to *Run in a Race*, that run without stretched arms, reaching forth towards the mark, the word in the Original is *ἐκτρέφω* which Beza renders, contending with the strength of my Soul after the things before, after the height of the virtue of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; that is, the experimental knowledge of the virtue of his death and resurrection, that is to say, the full communion with Christ in his holiness.

Fifthly, He testifies that he passeth over, or leaps over all difficulties, all impediments and hindrances, in his striving after this perfect conformity to Jesus Christ in his Death and Resurrection, which is also contained in that he doth press towards the mark, he doth thrust through all troops of impediments that stand to oppose him in his way, and with all the powers and possibilities of his soul extended, makes the pursuit after the full experience of the virtue of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yea likewise he bears witness, that every sincere believing soul ought to walk according to this rule, to be thus minded ver. 14. *Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded*; That is, let us thus count of our selves to be infinitely short of that which ought only to satisfy our souls, whatever degree of holiness we

have

have apprehended, and let us fix our eyes singly, and constantly upon the perfect holiness that souls attain to, through Communion with Christ in his Death and Resurrection, and let us forget all our labours and endeavours, and all the degrees of holiness that we have attained to, so as not to satisfy our selves in that measure and degree, and let us stretch out our Arms after full Communion with Jesus Christ, and let us pass over all difficulties pressing towards the mark, the fulness of Conformity to the Lords will, which the Lord hath determined to bring believers to through Communion with Jesus Christ their Mediatour, in his Death and Resurrection. Likewise the Apostle *John* testifies as much in *1 John* 3. 3. *Everyone that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure*: Mark what hope he speaks of; The second verse tells you, saith he *we are the Sons of God, and we know that when Christ appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*; So that the hope that he speaks of is the hope of Adoption, the hope of their union with Christ the first-born of all the Elect ones and the hope of their perfect Union and Communion with Jesus Christ in the highest Heavens: Now mark what the effect of this hope is; Those that have received this hope infused from the spirit of Jesus Christ, it occasions the souls to purify themselves as Jesus Christ is pure, that is all one as God the Father is pure, (Christ being but the express image of his Father) The Apostle means not that actually any soul having such an evidence of his union with Christ from the spirit, as produceth that blessed hope in him, is actually purified according to purification of purity that is in Christ; But he means, that the soul into whom this hope of his union with
Christ

Christ is infused, doth desire, breath after, long for endeavour with all the intentions of his soul, the same purity that is in Jesus Christ, satisfying his soul with no degree, no measure, less then the fulness of likeness unto Jesus Christ himself. Likewise it is evident that the spirit revealing unto any soul his union with Christ, doth occasion the soul to declare, that a conformity to the will of God is the only satisfying object of the desires of any soul, in regard the spirit of Christ makes the promises of union and Communion with God in Christ to be the motive unto perfection of holiness. *2 Cor. 7. 1.* Now if the very propounding of the promise be that which excites an heart unto perfect holiness, (perfect Conformity to the Lords will) then much more must the sense of the souls interest of Union and Communion with God in Christ, necessarily constrain a soul to pursue with all his strength after perfection of conformity to the Lords will, and to declare that no less then Conformity to the Lords will perfectly ought to satisfy the desires of any soul. And likewise it might be evident from the very prayer of the Apostle that he always made for believing souls, which was for their perfect Conformity to the Lords will, *1 Thes. 5. 23.* *Now the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly in Spirit Soul and Body:* And he prays that they might be filled with the fulness of God *Eph. 4. 19.* And as Scripture thus Testifies, that God is thus exalted in his holiness in any soul to whom the spirit doth reveal its union with Jesus Christ, by that souls declaring that a Conformity to the Lords will perfectly, ought only to satisfy the desires of any soul; So likewise the experience of souls receiving the evidence from the spirit of their union with Christ bears Witness of the same.

I. Hence

1. Hence it is that those souls that enjoy the Evidences of their union with Christ, are unsatisfied with their most holy duties, and acts of purest Obedience to the Lords blessed will. So that souls enjoying their union with Christ are always complaining of Imperfections and wants in their most holy actings. And

1. Hence it is that we shall hear constantly those pretious souls complain with much Bitterness, of the narrowness and straitness of the working of their wills in Conformity to the Lords Will.

2. You shall hear them always complaining (when Assisted most mightily by the spirit of Christ) of their want of singleness of Simplicity of heart in their wills conforming to the Lords will.

3. They are constantly complaining of the want of liberty of spirit in the compliance of their wills with the Lords blessed will. This David intimates when cries out *51. 12. Restore to me the Joy of thy Salvation, and Establish me with thy free Spirit*: He Apprehended his spirit to be much under Bondage and Thralldom, and with much earnestness he desires Communion with God again.

4. Hence those souls are always sadly complaining in their acts of purest obedience, of their want of fixedness and stability of the workings of the disposition of their wills to comply with Gods will.

5. You shall hear them complain of the Weakness, and Imperfection of the inward acts of the most pure Obedience that their souls render, of the Imperfection of their desires in prayer, even when they are drawn out by a mighty power from the spirit of Christ.

II. It is from hence also, that souls injoying the evidence of their union with the Lord Jesus, are perpetually groaning after a fuller measure of the sanctifying spirit of Jesus Christ, in what measure soever the sanctifying spirit is poured out upon them. Thus *David* often in the 119. Psalm begs for quickening; which in a word is but this, Lord send down more of the spirit of Life and Holiness from the Lord Jesus. Yea this you may observe from the workings of the spirit of the great Apostle *Paul*, *Rom 7.* how his soul groans after a larger portion of the sanctifying spirit of Christ, complaining to will is present with him, but to do is not yet present, that when the law of the spirit begins to work, the law of the flesh opposeth it, by which complaint he doth in effect but breath after a more mighty power of the sanctifying spirit of Christ, which might not only beget a compliance in his will to the Lords holy will, but might also carry it forth to perfection, that might cause his soul not only to bring forth the bud of holiness, but the ripe fruit of it, and his complaints are but the desiring of a power of the spirit, that the Law of the spirit, (that is the disposition infused by the spirit) might overcome the Law of the members, (that is, the corrupt dispositions that were naturally in him) so that his soul might be more then conquerer over Sin.

III. Hence also it is, that souls injoying the evidence of their union with Jesus Christ from the spirit of Christ, are constantly enquiring into, and searching to find out the secret Iniquities of their own hearts. That principle being firmly rooted in them by the Spirit of Revelation (that discovers to them their union with Christ) that a perfect conformity

to the Lords will ought only to satisfie the desires o any soul, Thence they being always conscious to themselves of a depth of wickedness that secretly possesseth their hearts, they are searching after the secret wickedness, those vailed and inclosed iniquities, that their hearts would even lock up as it were in dark Dungeons that the soul might never discern.

IV. Hence souls injoyning their evidence of their union with Christ, are calling in the assistance of the heart searching God to find out their Iniquities for them. According as you shall find *David*, *Psal.* 139. 23, 24. *Search me O God and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts* (the holy mans meaning is, that the Lord should so search him as to make him understand his own heart and to know his own thoughts) see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Thus he crys that the eye of the blessed Majesty of heaven might pierce through his heart, to discover all his wickedness and contrary walkings to the will of God, that then God might send down a conquering power to deliver him from those corruptions, and lead him into the path of holiness, that is, into a full conformity of the Lords blessed will.

V. Hence it is that souls injoying the evidence of their union with the Lord Jesus, are so delighted with the precious heavenly light of the Lords word in its discovery of the Souls unholiness, and in its discovery of the Lords blessed will concerning the Soul. Surely it was from hence that *David* (in *Psal.* 19. 10.) was so delighted with the Lords word, that he professed it was sweeter than the honey and the honey comb to him, because it revealed the precious will

will of God to him, and discovered his own heart to him, and thence was a help to conform his will to the Lords blessed will, that was the only satisfying object of his Souls desires.

VI. Hence it is also, that Souls injoying the evidence of their union with Christ, are so frequently breathing after the time of their dissolution. It is in regard their Souls never attain the fulness of rest, that satisfying object of their desires, till the time of their dissolution: Hence they groan being burdened with iniquity, and secretly cry out, O when shall I be worshipping of God purely? When shall I be free from this body of sin and death, that there may be a blessed union of Wills between thee and me, that this my vilest corrupt will shall never oppose and contradict thy will more? So that it is evident from experience, that the spirits revealing unto any soul its union with the Lord Jesus, doth occasion the soul necessarily to declare, that a perfect conformity to the Lords will, ought only to satisfy the desires of any soul.

Yea likewise it is evident also from reason, that the spirits discovery of a souls union with Jesus Christ, doth necessarily cause the soul it self to be satisfied with no portion of holiness but a full conformity to the Lords will.

I. In regard the spirits evidence of any souls union with Christ, doth cause the Soul to discern clearly, that a perfect conformity and subjection to the Lords will, is infinitely due from every creature. Whenever that precious light shines from the spirit of revelation into the soul, then the soul is filled with such high thoughts of the transcendency of the Lords glory, that thence the soul is convinced, that every creature

ture in heaven and earth, owes absolute, perfect subjection to the Lords blessed will: Now hence the soul cannot be satisfied with any degree of conformity to the Lords will, less than an absolute perfection of conformity: and likewise hence the soul is constrained to declare, that absolute conformity to the Lords will, ought only to be the center whereon the soul should rest.

II. The spirits revealing unto any soul its union with Christ, doth cause the soul to apprehend so clearly the ravishing beauty, and unspeakable lustre of the holiness of the Lords will, that thence a full subjection and conformity to that blessed holy will, appears as the highest thing that can be desirable by any soul. That sweetest discovery from the spirit of Christ unto a soul of its union with Christ, makes the soul apprehend the Majesty of Heaven to be so clothed with a garment of love, and makes the soul apprehend such a height, and depth, and length and breadth of love to be in God towards forlorn unlovely sinners, that thence the will of God appears in all things to be so good towards poor sinners, as the very beauty of it makes a full conformity in that will in a manner infinitely desired by the soul. Yea the soul is then so strongly convinced of the absolute goodness of the blessed will of God in all its motions, that thence the soul can take no rest nor contentment, while his will disagreeeth from that purest holy will that is so absolutely good in all its motions.

III. The spirits revealing to any soul his union with Christ, doth establish that blessed principle in the soul, that the most superlative happiness of

of every soul consists in perfect union and communion with God in Christ, the unity and community of wills between God and the soul. Through the spirits light cast into the dark soul, to discover the souls union with Christ, the heavenly brightness, and glittering resplendent Glory of the Lords goodness so shines round about the soul, that thence the soul discerns clearly that that the highest and most supream degree of the happiness of any soul, must necessarily consist in the conjunction and communion of the soul with that infinite goodness, in the souls nearest and largest participation of it. Thence that blessed principle is rooted in the soul, that the union and communion of wills between God and a Soul, is that top stair of happiness that any soul can possibly ascend to. Now thence, seeing happiness is the object of the desires of every soul naturally, the soul cannot be satisfied in it self without a perfect union of wills with that God in Christ, and perfect communion with him.

So that thus it is evident, both from Scripture, from the experience of the manner of the workings and motions of the souls enjoying the evidence of their union with Christ, and from reason it self, that the spirits evidence given unto any soul of its union with Christ, doth necessarily cause the soul to declare, that a perfect conformity to the Lords will, ought to be the only satisfying object of the Desires of any soul. So that it is apparent that the blessed Name of God is exalted in every soul, in the glory and brightness of its transcendent holiness to whom the spirit of Jesus Christ doth reveale its union with Christ.

Now I beseech ye, you that are suitable, (according as hath been opened, to take a righteous and just examination of your evidence of union with Christ received) to try whether you can prove to your own souls, or demonstrate from this precious reason, that your evidence of your union with Christ received, had God for its Father, and came down from Heaven only. But as I said formerly, so I say again, that I am confident that those souls whom the spirit hath blessed with the spirit of wisdom to discover to them their union with Christ, and with whom the spirit of light remains, those souls have a testimony to their hearts and spirits of the real descent of the evidence of their union with Christ, from heaven, from this reason now opened. Certainly there is not a soul among us, to whom at present the spirit of Christ doth witness his union; but his own heart doth witness, that that very testimony of the spirit of Christ did cause the blessed Name of God thus to be exalted through his soul; there is not such a soul certainly but his heart testifies that ever since he enjoyed that precious witness of the spirit, he hath born record and testimony to the world, he hath professed apparently, verbally and practically, that a perfect conformity to the Lords purest holy will, ought only to satisfy the desires of any soul: And questionless the soul also understands in some degree, that from thence hath proceeded the dissatisfaction of his soul in all the purest acts of obedience to the Lords blessed will. Questionless the soul understands, that thence it hath been that he could not, but in his most holy duties (when most assisted by the spirit

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of Christ) be still groaning under the sense of his own unholiness, under the sense of his want of that largeness and fulness of the concurrence of his will with the Lords blessed will, and under the sense of his want of freedom and liberty of spirit in his compliance with the Lords will; that he was convinced ought to have been in his soul: and questionless also that soul understands, that even from thence hath proceeded those precious desires that have ever since possessed his soul, after a larger portion of the sanctifying spirit of Christ; and that ever since he hath always been searching after the secret iniquities of his own heart, and hath been appealing to the heart-searching God, to find them out for him; and hath been delighted with the discovery of the Lords will, and his disagreement to that will. And questionless that soul understands sensibly; that since the spirit gave that testimony of his union with the Lord Jesus, he hath had many strugglings with his spirit to be content to live, that he might be redeemed from the power of his contradicting will. Thus I doubt not but the spirit of Jesus Christ also doth irradiate the precious Gospel-Truth, that the soul is able to prove to it self the descent of its own evidence to be from heaven, that God was the Father of that his evidence. But yet here I must take in every confident soul without exception, that thereby the power of the Truth of Jesus Christ might seize upon hearts. And,

I. I must desire all souls that think they shall be everlastingly saved by Christ, to search into their hearts, to know whether their apprehension of salvation by Christ did produce these blessed effects

in their hearts or no. I must appeal to your own Consciences ; Did your apprehensions of salvation by Christ infuse that principle into your minds and hearts, that a perfect conformity to the Lords blessed holy will ought only to satisfie the desires of any soul ? Let Conscience answer, Was this blessed principle so rooted in your hearts by those apprehensions of salvation by Christ, that thence your hearts have been unsatisfied ever since, in your most holy actings, in those acts of the purest obedience that ever you rendered to the Majesty of heaven, that thence ever since you could not but be complaining (when your hearts were most enabled to any act of obedience) of the narrowness of your wills in compliance to Gods will ? And that you could not but be complaining of the want of singleness and uprightness ; and simplicity of heart in every act of Obedience, yet that you could not but be complaining of the want of freedom in your wills to comply with the Lords will, that you have ever since been groaning for want of the liberty of your wills in that compliance, the want of facility and easiness in your wills answering to the Lords blessed will. Souls, I can only call for Conscience to answer ; I beseech you stop not its mouth, but let it give an Answer in the presence of God, whether your hopes of salvation by Christ, did so root that principle in your hearts, that nothing could satisfie your souls, but a full conformity to the Lords will, so as you have been unsatisfied in the fullest acts of Obedience you have performed, that thence you have caused the Name of God to be exalted through you, that you have born witness to the world that the perfection

of holiness dwells in God only, and all ought to bow down in subjection to that absolute holy will of his.

2. I beseech you try whether your apprehension of salvation by Christ did so sweetly build your souls up in the belief of that great Truth, that no less than a perfect conformity to the Lords will ought to satisfy the desires of any soul, that thence you have been perpetually groaning after a larger portion of the sanctifying spirit of Christ. What do your hearts answer? Have you not satisfied your selves with freedom from gross sins, and thought your condition should be safe enough, because free from the gross pollutions of the world? And others of you, have you not satisfied your selves with holy duties, and thought you gained a sufficient degree of holiness, that your hearts never groaned after a larger portion?

3. Examine whether your apprehensions of your salvation by Christ, did ever engrave that great Maxim in your hearts, that nothing ought to satisfy your souls but a full conformity to the Lords will, that thence you have ever since been enquiring and making diligent search to find out the hidden iniquities of your own hearts? Do not many of your Consciences attest this before the Lord, that it was never made your work one moment to search what iniquity was in your hearts undiscovered?

4. Was ever your spirit so caused to apprehend, that nothing ought to satisfy your souls but a perfect conformity to the Lords will, by your apprehension of your being saved by Christ, that thence you have appealed to the Lord to be the trier and examiner

examiner of your rotten deceitful hearts, to find out your Iniquities for you ; that your wills might be brought into a more precious conformity to his blessed will ? Did ever your souls breath forth one such request before the Lord to this day ? Nay, let me ask you, whether you durst now in the presence of the heart-searching God, come to say, *Lord, search me, try me, see if there be any way of wickedness in me ?* If so, then how far are you from receiving the true evidence, whose descent is from heaven, whose Father is God, that evidence that proceeds from the spirit of Christ, of your union with Christ, and salvation by him ?

5. Did ever your apprehensions of your salvation by Christ, so confirm in your Souls that great Gospel-Truth, that the Lords blessed will ought to have the most absolute, perfect subjection from the will of any soul, that thence your Souls have delighted and taken contentment in the light of the Lords precious Truth revealing the Lords will to you, and revealing the disagreement of your own wills to the Lords will ? Are not your souls to this day so far from delighting in the discovery of the Lords will to your souls, as your spirits loath and hate those blessed discoveries of the Lords will to you, and your hearts inwardly bulk and swell against the discoveries of the Lords will, that you have hard thoughts, and think if God require such holiness, such praying, such watching over the heart, words and thoughts, this is a hard Master indeed, to require such strictness as no holy heart can observe and answer : How then can you say confidently that you shall be saved by Christ, when your apprehensions of salvation

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by Christ, cannot testifie in the least degree from this effect, of the causing the Name of God to be exalted through you, that the descent is from God?

6. Lastly, Examine whether your apprehension of being saved by Christ, begat such a principle in you, that nothing could satisfie you but a perfect conformity of your wills to the will of Christ? that your hearts have groaned after a dissolution, after the time of breaking the corrupt union between Body and Soul, that you might no longer be detained under corruption, and a necessity of sinning, that you might no longer have your wills opposite to the Lords will? Alas, do not your souls answer, that such a time of dissolution is rather a time of horreur to your souls? Do not your hearts answer, that want of unity to the Lords will, is so little burdensom to you, that could you dwell in your corrupt bodies, it would be accounted happiness to enjoy the pleasures of sin for ever, rather than that perfect union and communion with God in Christ? If your hearts answer any of these things, I beseech you see how far you are from being able to prove to your own souls, that the apprehension of your salvation by Christ, did descend from God? Questionless did they proceed from God, they would cause the Name of God and his Holiness to be exalted through you, they would cause your souls to bear record to the glory of the Lords holiness, to testifie that such a perfection of holiness dwells in God, that his will ought to be the Rule for the conforming of the will of every Soul.

F I N I S.

William Newson owns this Book: 3

ERRATA.

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